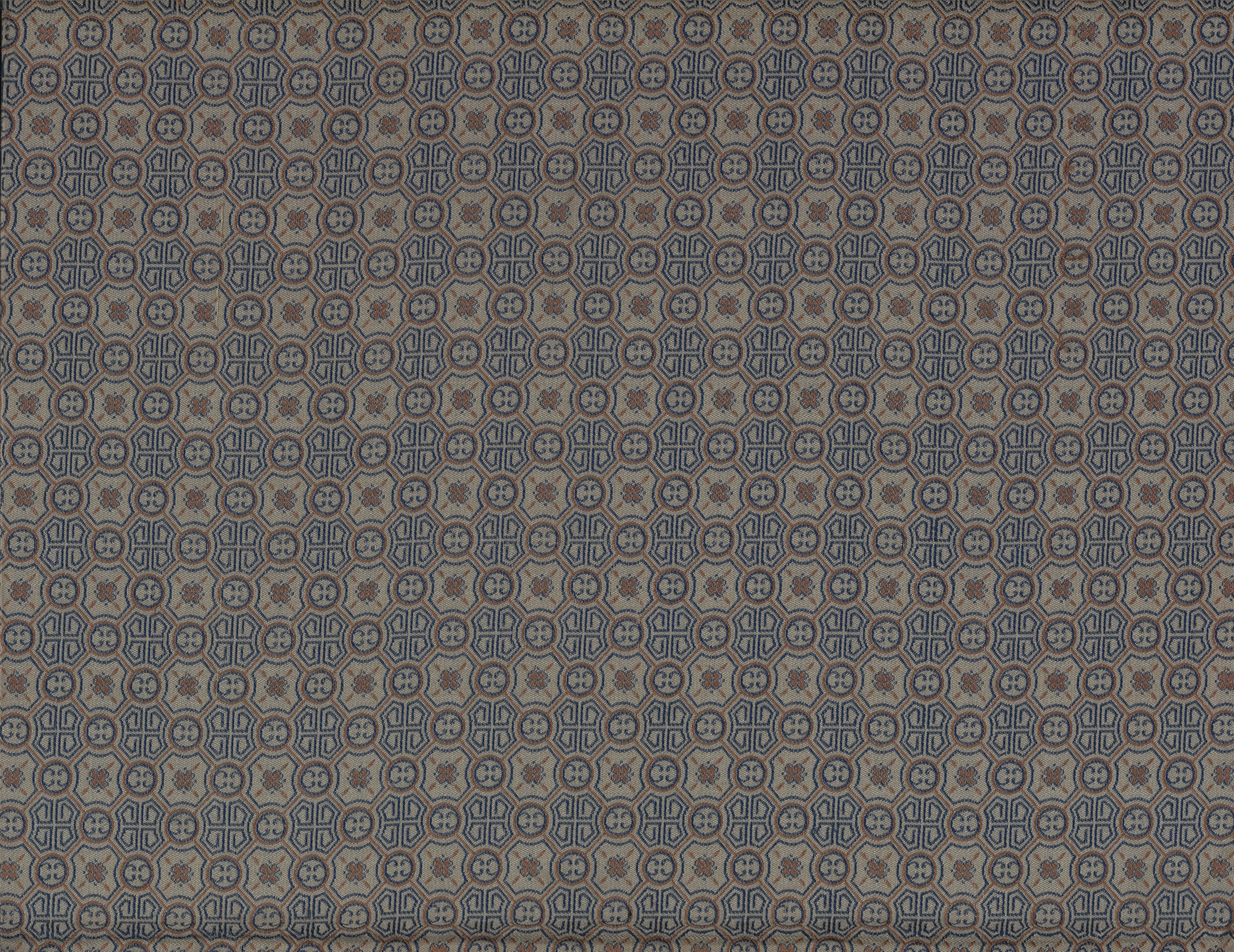

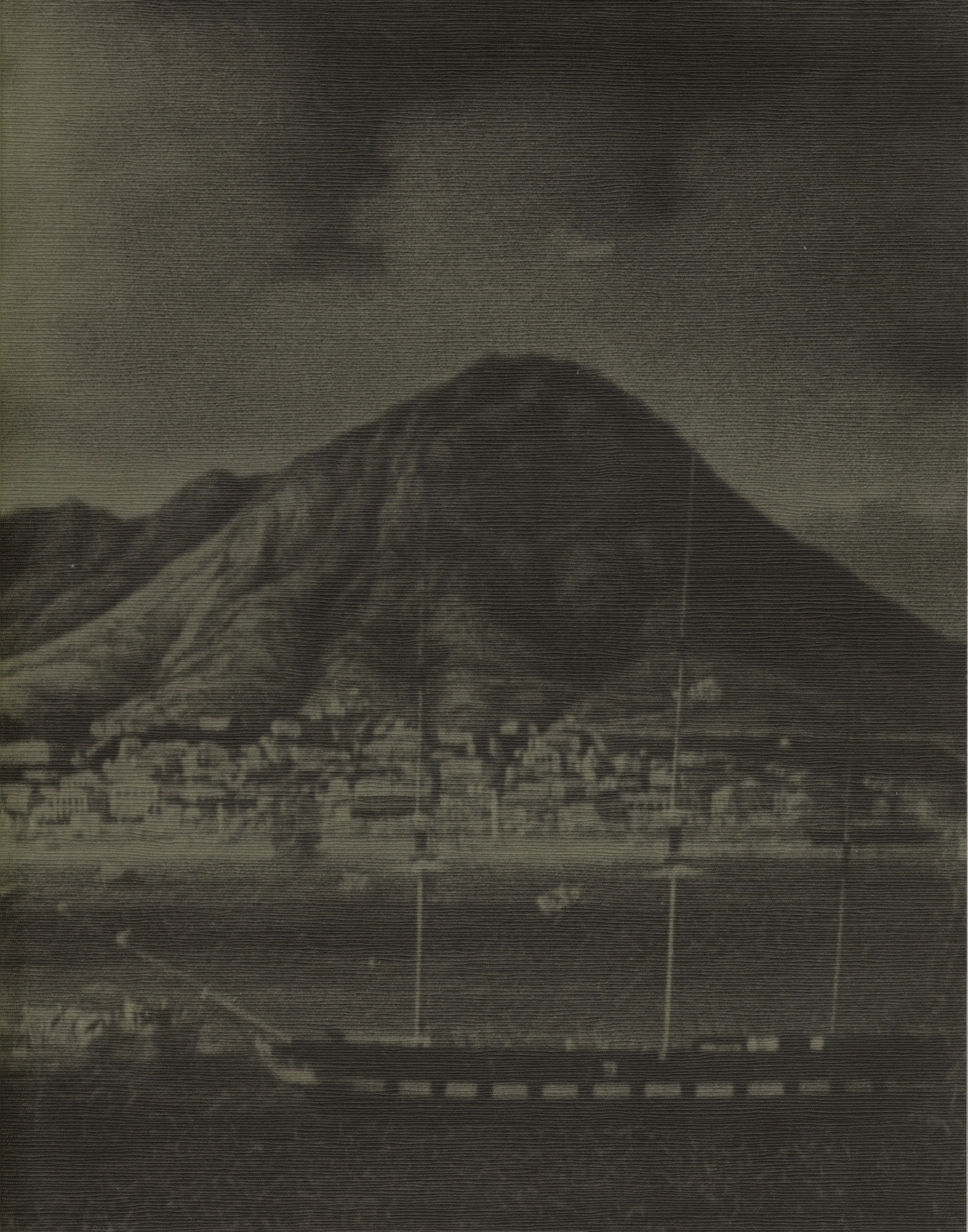

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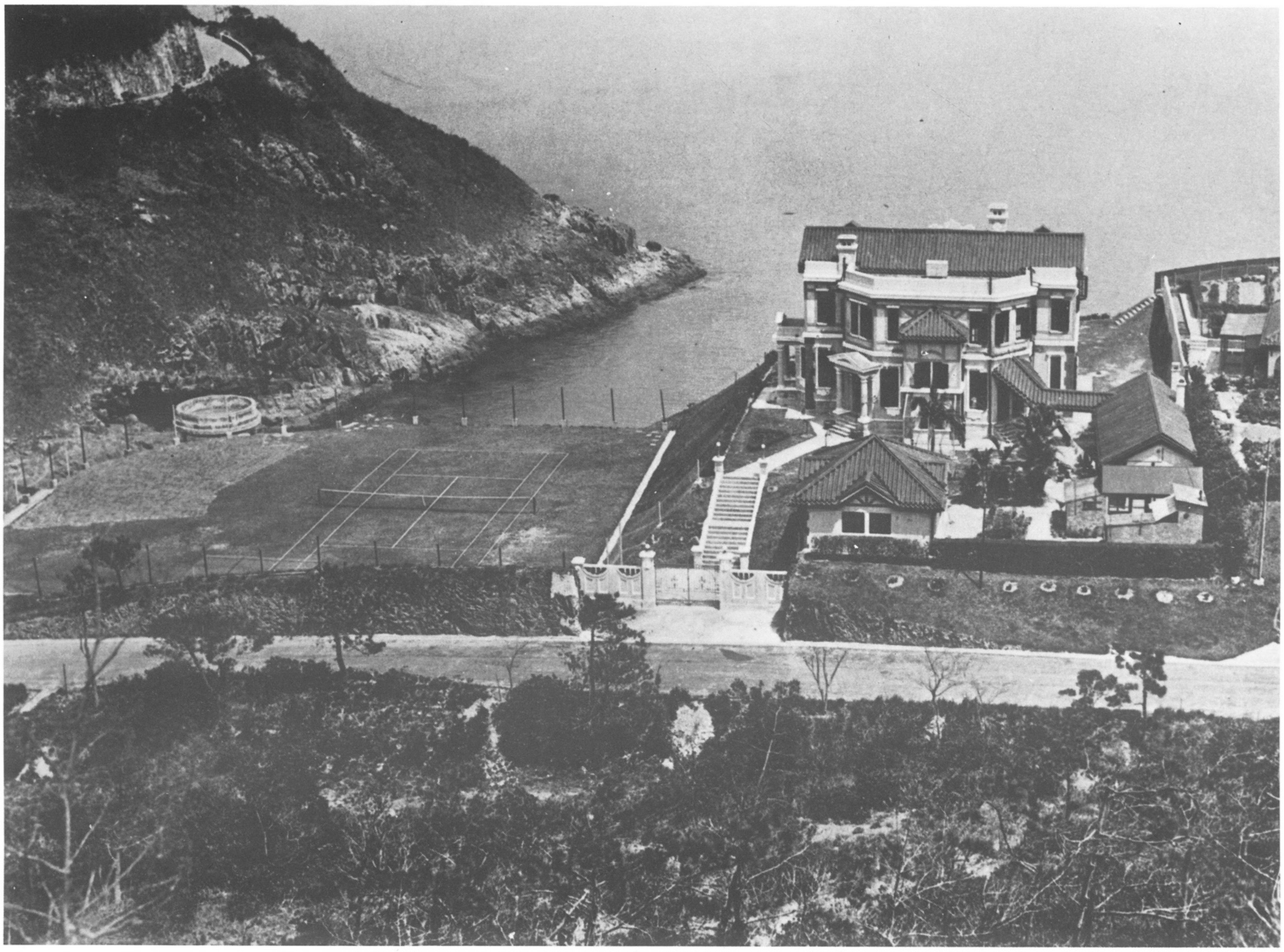
A FAMILY ALBUM

A FAMILY ALBUM

T. S. LO

April 4th, 1918:
The wedding of Victoria Jubilee Ho Tung and Man Kam Lo. With this marriage, the destinies of the two great Hong Kong families, Lo and Ho, were interlocked forever.



Like my family, this book is a multi-coloured kaleidoscope — where the present is mixed with the past, where Lo's are mixed with Ho's, where doing good is mixed with the struggle for survival, where the wish for perfection is mixed with compromise and where strength is mixed with weakness.

In our family, stories were told and retold dozens of times. Some began as fact and became legend. Others began as legend and became history. I tell them to you as I heard them and I relate my own as I remember them.

Early memories haunt us all. For me, the light touch of fingertips on my eyelids brings scores rushing back.

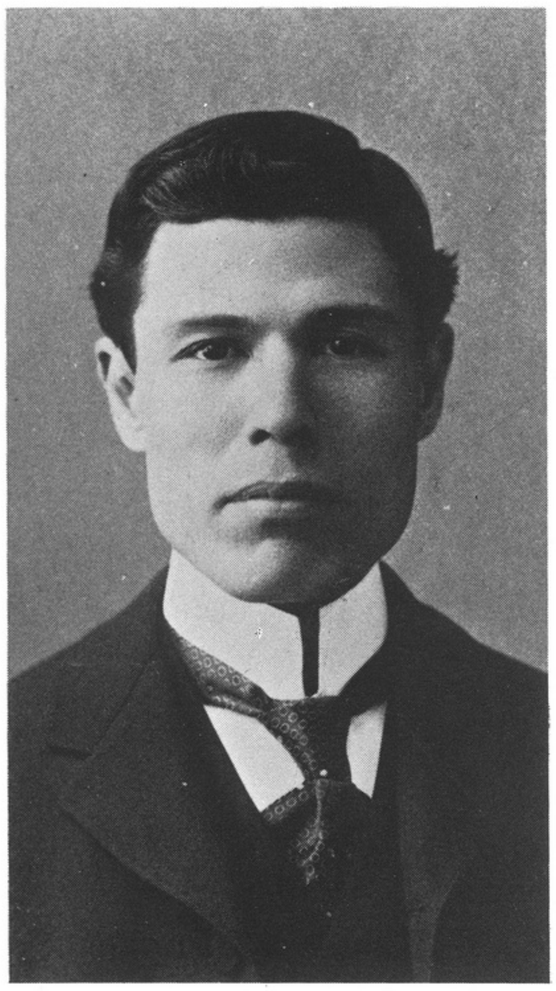
My mother, Victoria Jubilee, was a real stickler about naps — two hours every afternoon or I could not go out and play. Not only did I have to lie down — I had to sleep. To ensure that I didn't cheat, Victoria required my amah* to sit by my bedside and keep her fingertips on my eyelids. The theory was: if my eyeballs were moving, I was not asleep.

When we did get outside to play, there always was another amah ready with a towel to make sure we did not catch a chill. It took a bit of the fun out of hide-and-seek at "Nettlewood"* or "Tytam" to have an amah dash across the lawn and into the bushes to towel you down . . . and betray your hiding place in the process.

Note: "Amah", a nursemaid or servant.

Note: "Nettlewood", the mid-levels house where I was born. It is a bungalow with a basement, a number of gardens and a tennis court — all of which feature in this story.

"Tytam" was our extended family's week-end retreat where I lived when Deidre, Bevin and James were born.



Robert Ho Tung

But my childhood was an easy one compared to that of my formidable grandfather on my mother's side, Sir Robert Ho Tung (何啓東).

Legend has it that Sir Robert was the son of a Dutch merchant named Bosman and a lady from the Sze (史) family of Shanghai. Records show December 22, 1862 as his birth date.

Born with an ambitious streak, he knew he needed an education to get what he wanted. To pay for his schooling, he collected rusty nails on Hong Kong beaches — straightened them out, cleaned them up and resold them. The frugality he evidently learned in those early days remained with him for the rest of his life.

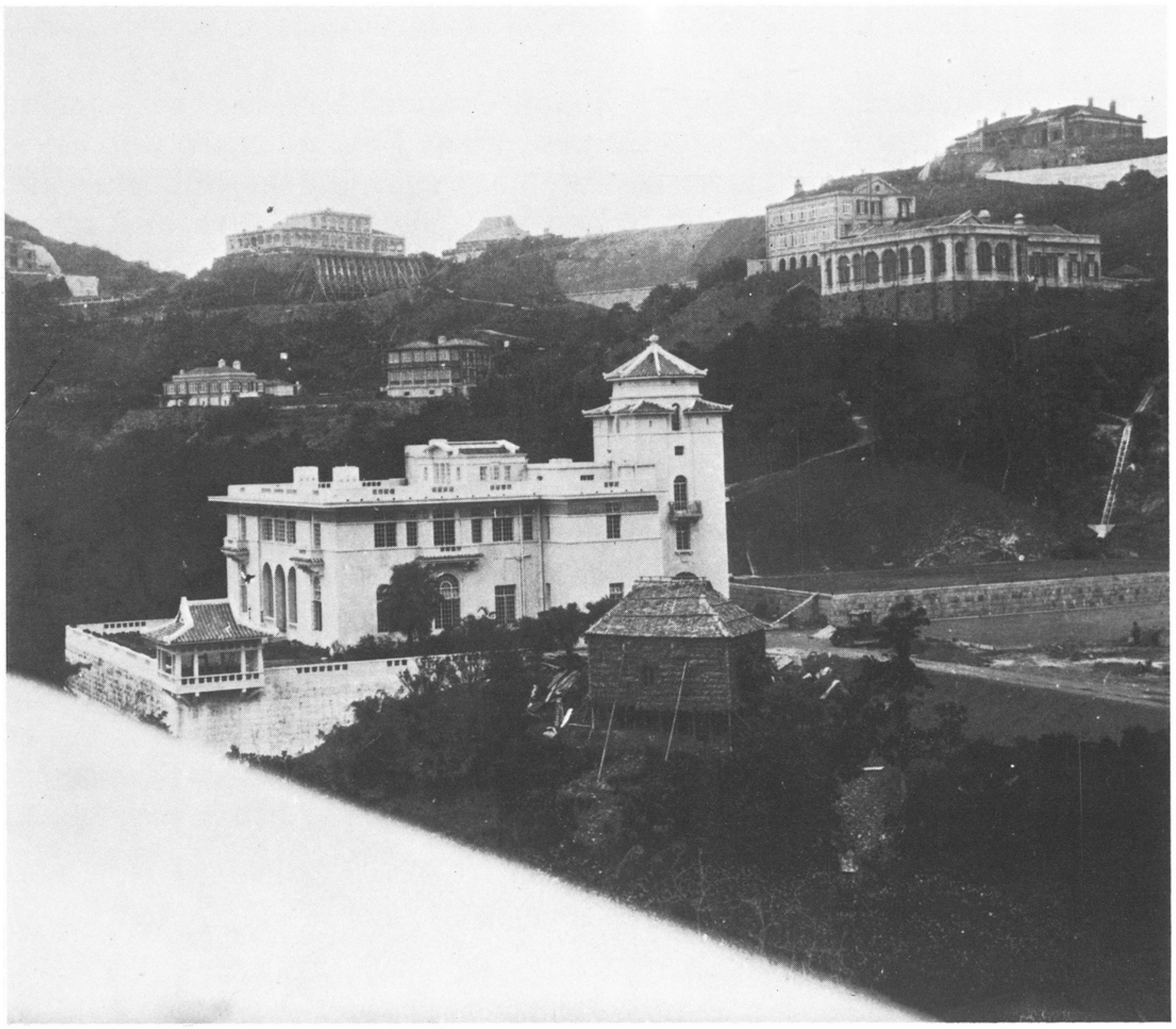
One of our favourite family stories is set at "The Falls", Sir Robert's turreted mansion on Victoria Peak complete with its own pagoda and Moon Gate. There was a dip in the road before the elaborate entrance gates and Sir Robert was always quite keen to stop the car there to admire the view and take the air.

On one occasion, he dropped a 10-cent piece. He immediately looked for it in the grass. Naturally, his nurses helped but the coin was nowhere to be found. Finally, after stroking his back and much cooing, the nurses wooed him back into the car.

The next time that he went back to the Falls, he stopped the car at the usual spot and to the utter amazement of the nurses continued the search for the coin. Their complaints were met by a stern lecture on "watching pennies."

It was not long before the coin was found — prompting another lecture on the theme: "To make money one must be persistent."

Of course the coin had been "dropped" by the nurses to avoid further search but no one ever dared tell him the truth. I'm sure he knew and did not care.



"The Falls", Sir Robert's mansion on the Peak. He was the first non-European to be allowed to have a house in the Peak and in the 1920s he built this mansion as the matrimonial home for Lady Clara.

A mountain stream flowed nearby and created, during the rainy season, a waterfall that gave the house its name. A beautiful mansion, it had floors of parquetted teak, a dining room that seated 200 guests, nine bedrooms, half a dozen baths and three huge reception halls.

It was used by the Red Cross during the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong. During the war period, 10 bombs fell on it — blame was placed on its name.

Ho K'ai-tung, known to his friends by his style name Ho Hiu-sang (born at dawn), shortly before the turn of the century. He took the European name Robert after his first knighthood in 1915.

Robert Ho Tung as a young man.

And a few years later. According to family lore, Sir Robert grew his moustache after travelling to Switzerland for monkey gland implants. The late Nationalist President Chiang Kai-shek reportedly had the same treatments.

A Family Affair With Jardines

His frugality served him well, however. By the early 20th century he was a director of 18 major companies on the China coast and the board chairman of a number of them. He also commanded huge real estate holdings in Hong Kong, Shanghai and elsewhere.

In 1900, he and his brother Ho Fook established the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong.

He was the epitome of the self-made man, accumulating throughout his long life vast fortunes and prestige.

His most public position was Hong Kong Comprador of Jardine, Matheson & Co. He joined that "noble house" as a shipping clerk in 1880 and thereafter for some 67 years, worked his way up into positions of power.

His brothers Ho Kam Tong and Ho Fook were also major powers within Jardines as were my paternal grandfather Lo Cheung Shiu (羅祥肇) and many other Lo relatives, including Uncle M.H. who in 1945 became the first Chinese to join Jardines Private Office.

Legend has it that Sir Robert's brother-in-law, Choy Sing-nan, was the instigator of the long Ho-Lo association with Jardines. Choy evidently spoke English badly and feared that he would be cheated — so he offered the job of comprador to Robert.

Immediately after my grandfather became chief comprador of the Hong Kong office in 1883, he brought in his two brothers as assistant compradors. Ho Fook eventually succeeded him in the job, which was then taken over by Grandfather Lo, who was also Ho Fook's brother-in-law. The Hong Kong comprador post shifted back and forth between Lo's and Ho's until the department was abolished in 1950.

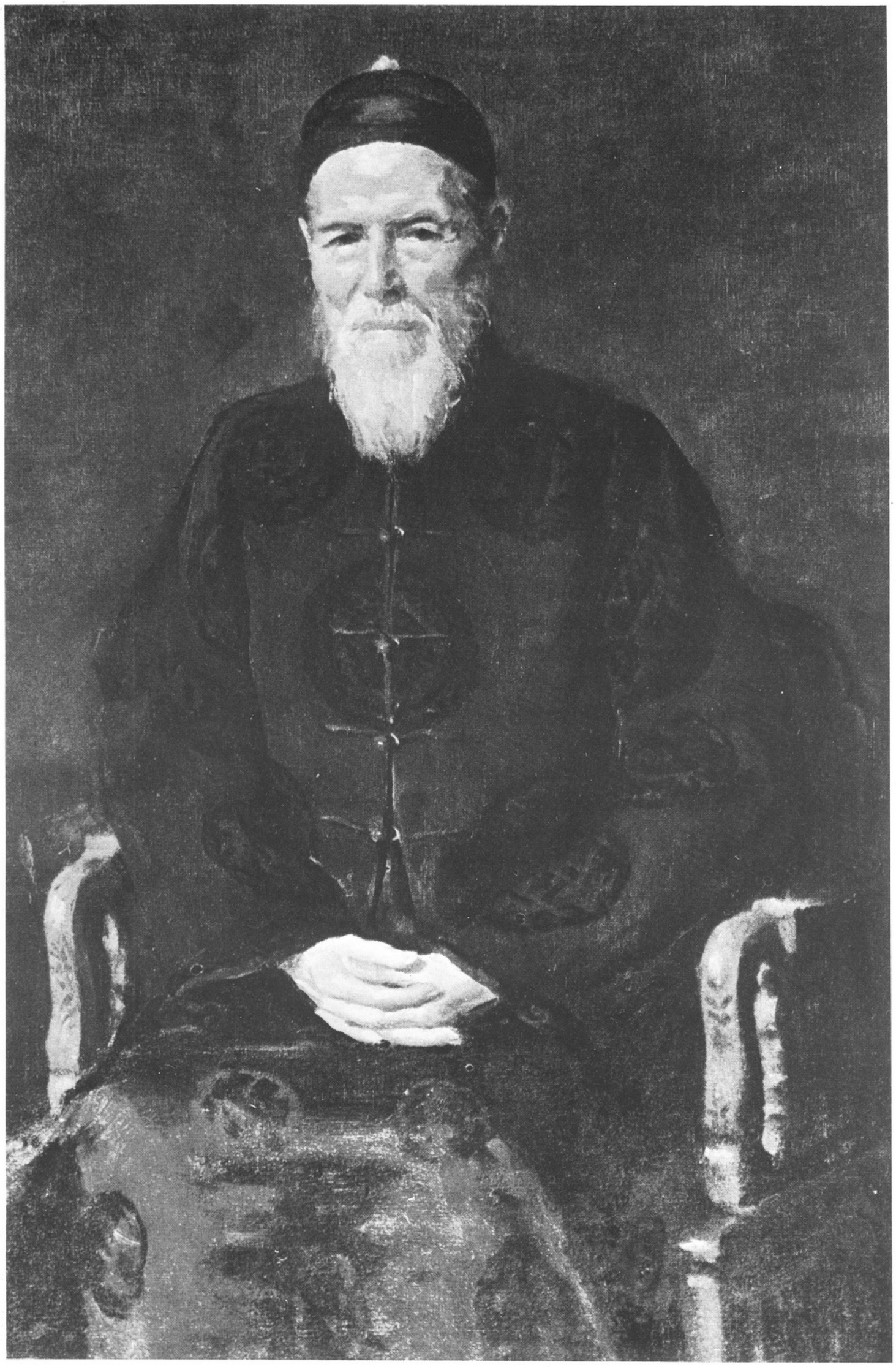
Sir Robert was a proud man, and a vain man. In 1949, shortly after his official retirement, he unsubtly hinted to Jardines that his portrait should be painted and hung in their boardroom. Jardines was not overly thrilled with the idea but agreed on the condition that they chose the artist. Sir Oswald Birley was imported to perform the honours and immediately he and Sir Robert clashed — over the question of Sir Robert's medals.

Sir Robert collected medals and decorations the way other men collect stamps. When he died in 1956, a partial list of his decorations filled a whole page of the South China Morning Post. The medals were uncountable — British, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Annamese, Portuguese and even one from the Vatican. In 1915, he was created Knight Bachelor by King George V and in 1955, Queen Elizabeth II made him Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

He selected 22 of his decorations for the artist to paint into the portrait. Birley gagged and refused — insisting that the decorations would ruin the quiet dignity of his portrait of a distinguished elderly man in a black silk Mandarin jacket. An impasse developed until my grandfather, who was already nearly 87, decided to employ a local artist to paint the medals separately. They now hang — beneath the official portrait — in Jardine's boardroom.

Ho Kam Tong

Ho Fook



The artist insisted on portraying Sir Robert without his medals but the Old Man won — and a separate painting of the medals hangs below the portrait in Jardine's boardroom.

At about the same time, Sir Robert sat for this photograph and autographed dozens for all his family and friends.

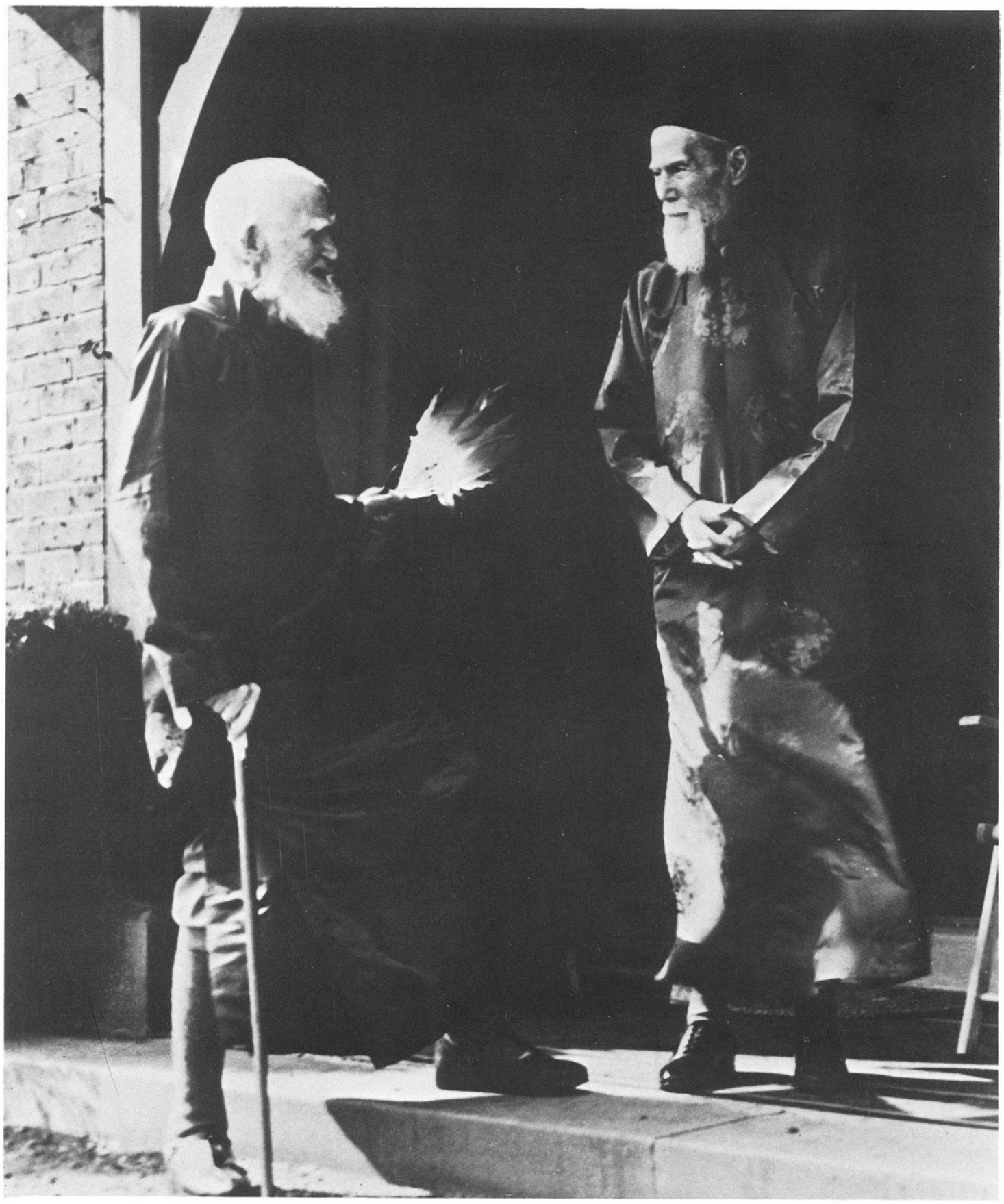
Several of these honours — including we suspect, both his knighthoods — he bought one way or another.

Legend has it that he contributed Hong Kong $10 million to the University of Hong Kong to get his second knighthood. Spending money like that was a bit out of character — and M.K. was so astounded he wrote the Old Man a letter congratulating him for that "magnificent gift."

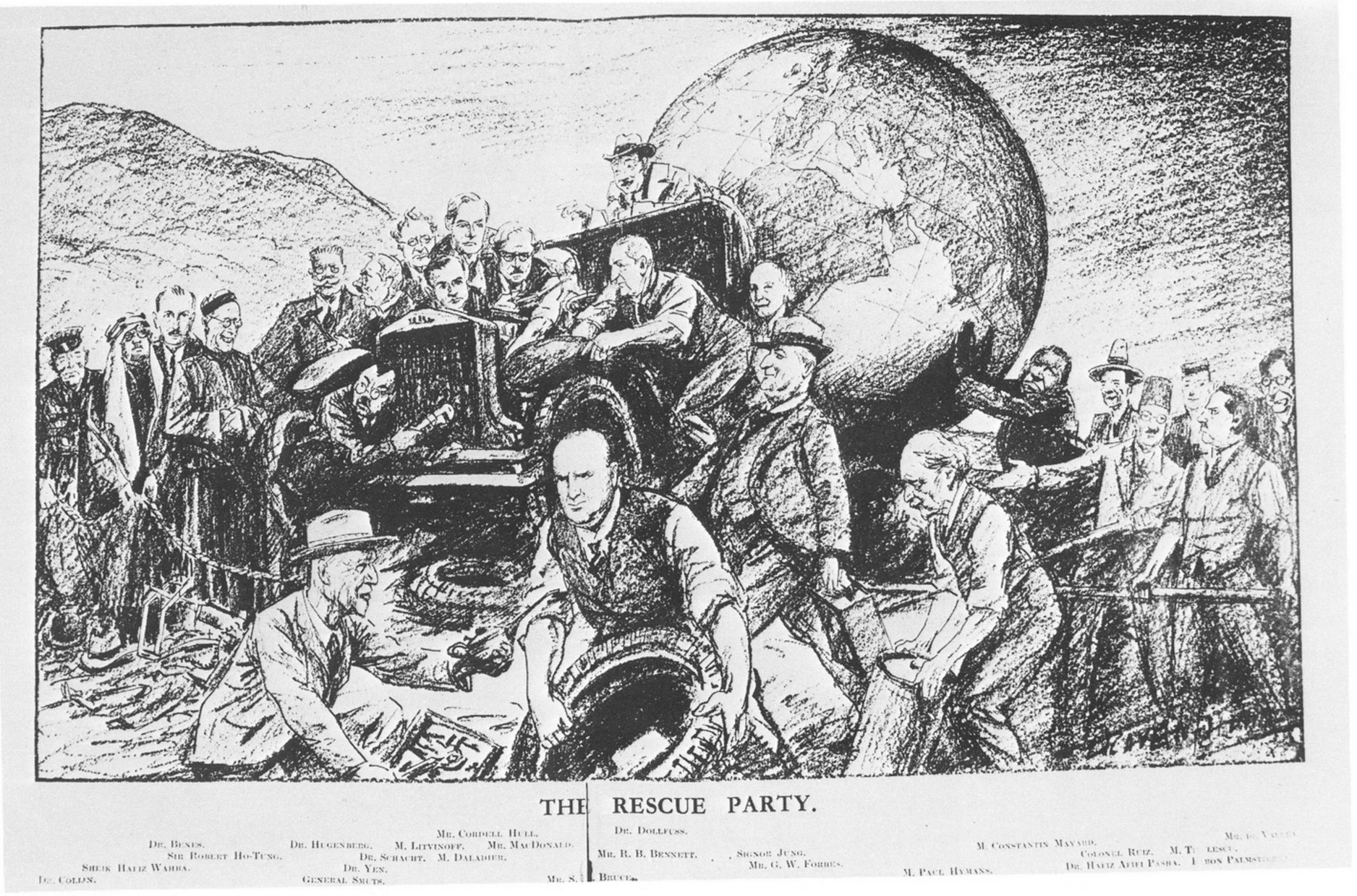
There are several theories as to why he wanted the second title. One theory — and having known the Old Man, the one I tend to believe — is that he wanted a higher honour, an inheritable title . . . a Baronetcy. Proponents of this theory say he was cross when he ended up with a second knighthood instead of becoming Lord Ho Tung and he decided to get a little of his own back.

He esconced himself in a wheelchair and went to London surrounded by his nurses. At Buckingham Palace, he sat in his chair looking so old, feeble and sickly that Queen Elizabeth got off her dais to tap him on the shoulder — instead of having him kneel before her as is traditional. The British public approved of the Queen's graciousness towards an ailing 92-year-old gentleman.

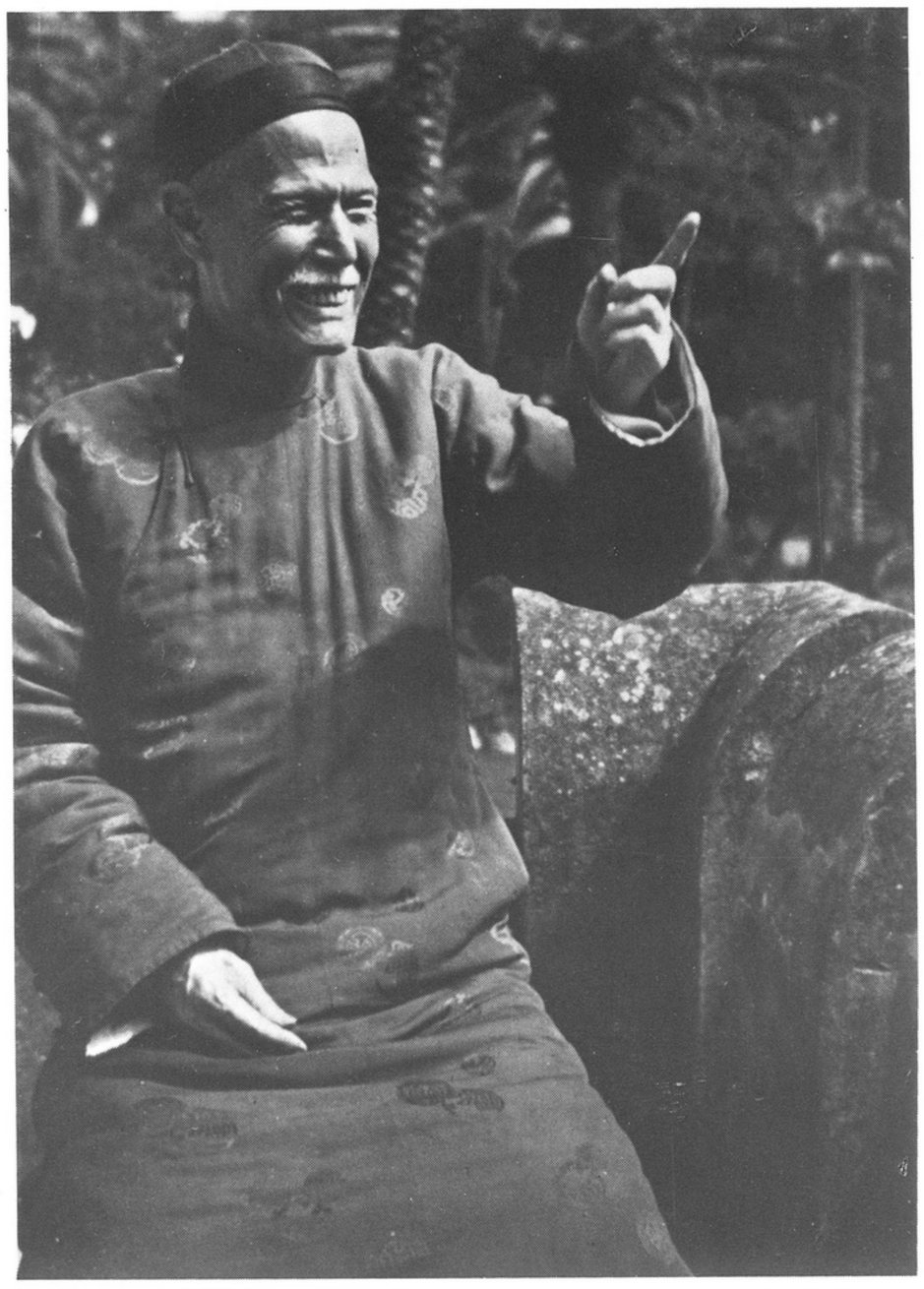
The next day, he carefully arranged to be photographed cavorting about town — with no wheelchair in sight.



Which is the real Sir Robert? The Old Man is on the left and the gentleman on the right is George Bernard Shaw, who has donned one of his friend's robes. This picture was taken in Bernard Shaw's garden in 1948.



This Punch cartoon of June 21, 1933 depicting Sir Robert as part of a rescue party trying to save the world pleased the Grand Old Man of Hong Kong immensely and



by April 1934 he was still chuckling.

Throughout his long life, Sir Robert leaned on Vic for support and advise . . . though there was always a pretty nurse close at hand.

In nearly every memory I have of Sir Robert, there is a nurse close at hand.

The Old Man was, quite frankly, a hypochondriac. Though hunger in those struggling early years must have taken its toll — he decided in his mid 30's that he was an invalid and stayed that way for the rest of his life. His worst problem was his stomach. He was so nervous about what went into his stomach that, for example, he drank only sour milk. And he chewed each mouthful of milk 70 times before swallowing. A nurse sat by his side carefully counting each chew lest he missed one.

Besides, he liked having pretty nurses catering to his every whim — and that he was a ladies' man, there is living proof.

Victoria Jubilee, my mother and Sir Robert's eldest child, was the old man's companion, accountant and secretary until her marriage. Thereafter and throughout his life, it was to her that he addressed most of his complaints.

Vic tells the story of the day Sir Robert called her to attend him. He was obviously embarrassed but he stroked his long beard and whispered: "Victoria, these nurses . . . they're not what they used to be."

My mother is a practical woman and only a prude when it suits her — she knew exactly what he meant.

"It will be the death of you, father!" she said quietly — and she was probably the only person in the family who ever dared to talk to him in quite this way. In the end he did not take another concubine.

He was then well into his 80's.

His frugality served him well.

Lovely Victoria was her father's confidante, secretary, companion and adviser until his death.

Sir Robert was not my only relative to have problems with a gambling mother. My father's mother, Grandmother Lo, loved to play the horses.

George Ho remembers the great Jockey Club fire of 1918.

"M.K. heard about the fire and dashed to the scene to look for his mother. I remember him running against traffic shouting her name. He finally found her, quite safe and sound though a little grumpy at having been interrupted in her betting."

The Founding Of A Dynasty

But there were few things in life that Sir Robert wanted that Sir Robert didn't get. One of those was children. At a very young age, Sir Robert was engaged to Margaret (Mak Sau-Ying) (麥秀英) Maclean, a daughter of A.C. Maclean who had become a Jardine partner in 1849.

Margaret's family was not wealthy and she had not been well educated. When her mother died shortly before the marriage, she was brought to live at the Ho Tung house as more or less a servant until the wedding. Sir Robert, meanwhile, was forced to move out since propriety prevented them both from living under the same roof.

In those days it was necessary to pay the bride's family a rather substantial sum of money as a "betrothal gift" and Sir Robert, then a struggling young clerk, had been saving for months.

According to a story Vic loves to tell, one day Sir Robert was walking on the praya when he bumped into his mother.

"She was sobbing and about to commit suicide by leaping into the sea," Vic recounted. "Papa asked what was wrong and his mother admitted she had gambled away all the money he had saved for the engagement. Papa, who was an avid fantan* player himself and could understand, talked her out of the suicide and told her not to worry — he would make more and save more."

Sir Robert and Margaret were married in 1881.

Note: "Fantan" is a Chinese gambling game which involves guessing whether the number of sticks covered by a bowl, when divided by three or four, would leave one, two, three or none.

SIR ROBERT'S MOTHER

LADY MARGARET'S MOTHER

Grandmother Margaret and Ho Wing. She could bear Grandfather Robert no children so after adopting Ho Wing she arranged a marriage with her . . .

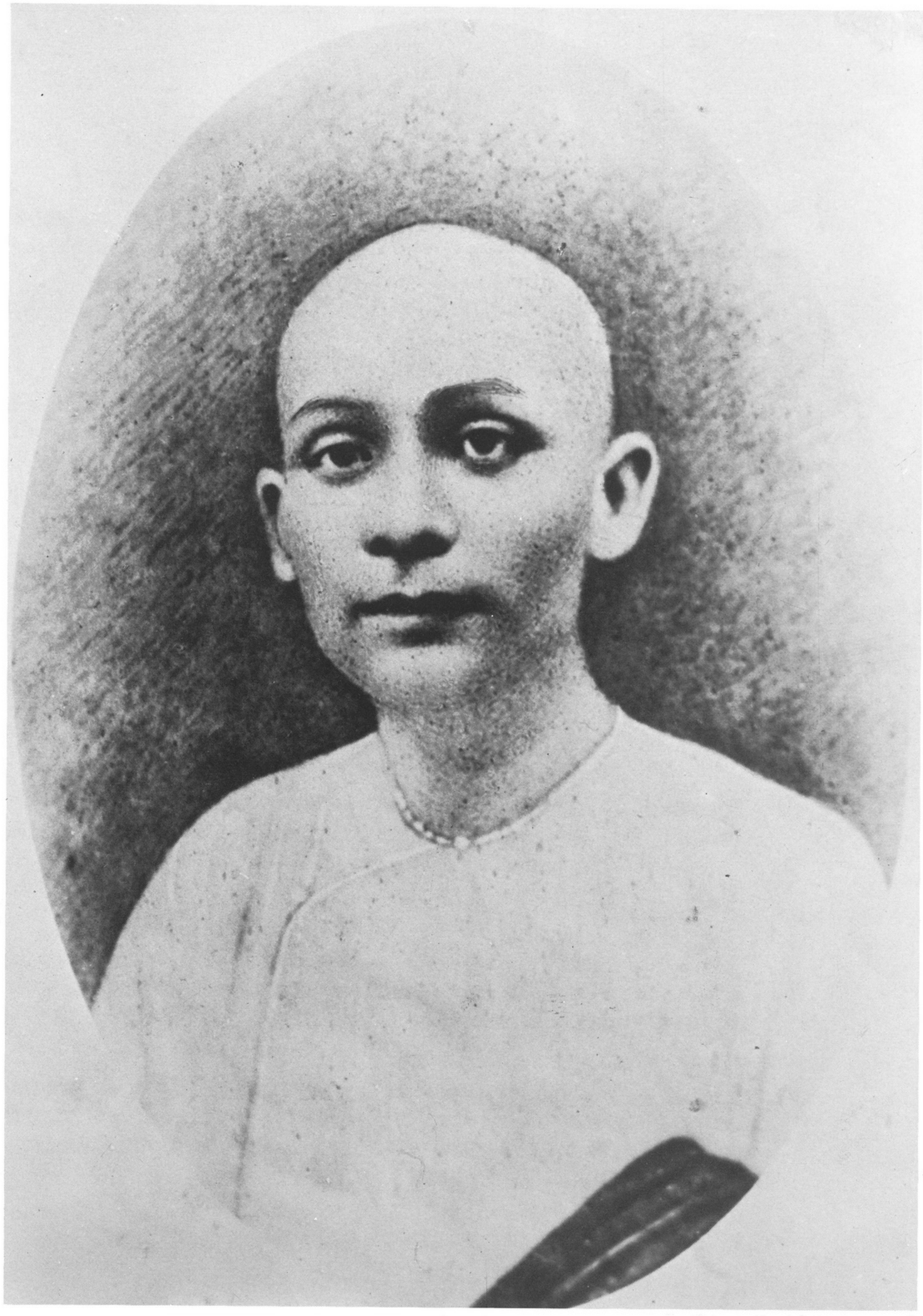
When it became apparent that Grandmother Margaret could not have any children of her own. Sir Robert adopted — in accordance with Chinese custom — Ho Sai Wing (何世榮), the eldest son of his third brother Ho Fook. He and Grandmother Margaret then selected a concubine for him — Chau Yee Man (周綺文) — but it was many years before she was to bear him a daughter, my Aunt Mary.

Margaret, being a dutiful Chinese wife felt it was her duty to make sure Grandfather had children of his own. When she saw that Grandfather admired her younger and exceptionally pretty cousin Clara (Cheung Ching Yung) (張靜蓉), she decided to arrange a match.

The letter she wrote in her dainty, schoolgirlish caligraphy to Clara's mother has become a family heirloom. In it she promises that Clara would be treated as an "equal" wife and not a concubine.

beautiful cousin, Clara.

Clara's father, Cheung Tak Fai, doted on his vivacious daughter and promised her she would never be forced into marriage.



The letter has an affectionate ring . . . until one examines the motive behind the pointed remarks about a mother's right to consent to a marriage and "a daughter would not disobey."

As Grandmother Margaret was well aware, Clara's father, Cheung Tak Fai (張德輝), an officer with the Chinese Customs Service, had doted on his bright, vivacious daughter.

Recognizing her as a strong-willed young woman, he had promised her that she would not be forced into any marriage. Her mother had pledged to remember this although she certainly disapproved.

Her father died when Clara, who was born on 19th December 1875, was 16 and her mother evidently began having second thoughts about the matter. Grandmother Margaret's letter seems designed to overcome any guilt feelings Clara's mother had about breaking that pledge.

Clara's mother, Mrs. Cheung Tak Fai or "Paw Paw" to Vic, worried that her beautiful daughter would be left an Old Maid and so she hid the engagement cakes under the bed.

Despite Grandmother Margaret's note that the letter was specially written "lest your daughter has little faith in our sincerity," Clara's mother evidently decided not to take any chances. According to stories Clara often told Vic and the other children, she was sent away to visit friends while the engagement preparations were underway and only learned of the betrothal from a servant girl who had seen the lacquer boxes of engagement cakes hidden under the bed.

Clara was furious. She reportedly considered suicide but finally decided to make the best of the situation and that she certainly did.

They were married in February 1895. In accordance with Margaret's pledge, the wedding ceremony was perfectly proper. Grandfather wore the full bridegroom's costume with its traditional double red sash and Clara was fetched to her new home in the red wedding sedan chair.

Sir Robert's first child was a very precious princess indeed. Victoria Jubilee struck this Victorian pose during a trip to England.

A rare photograph of little Henry and Victoria playing in Ho Kam Tong's garden in 1899.

The Dynasty's First Progeny

Clara produced 10 children. The first child, my mother, was born on 16th June 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. In honour of the beloved old Queen, she was named Victoria Jubilee.

Fifteen months later, came Henry, who died of pneumonia at the age of 20 months.

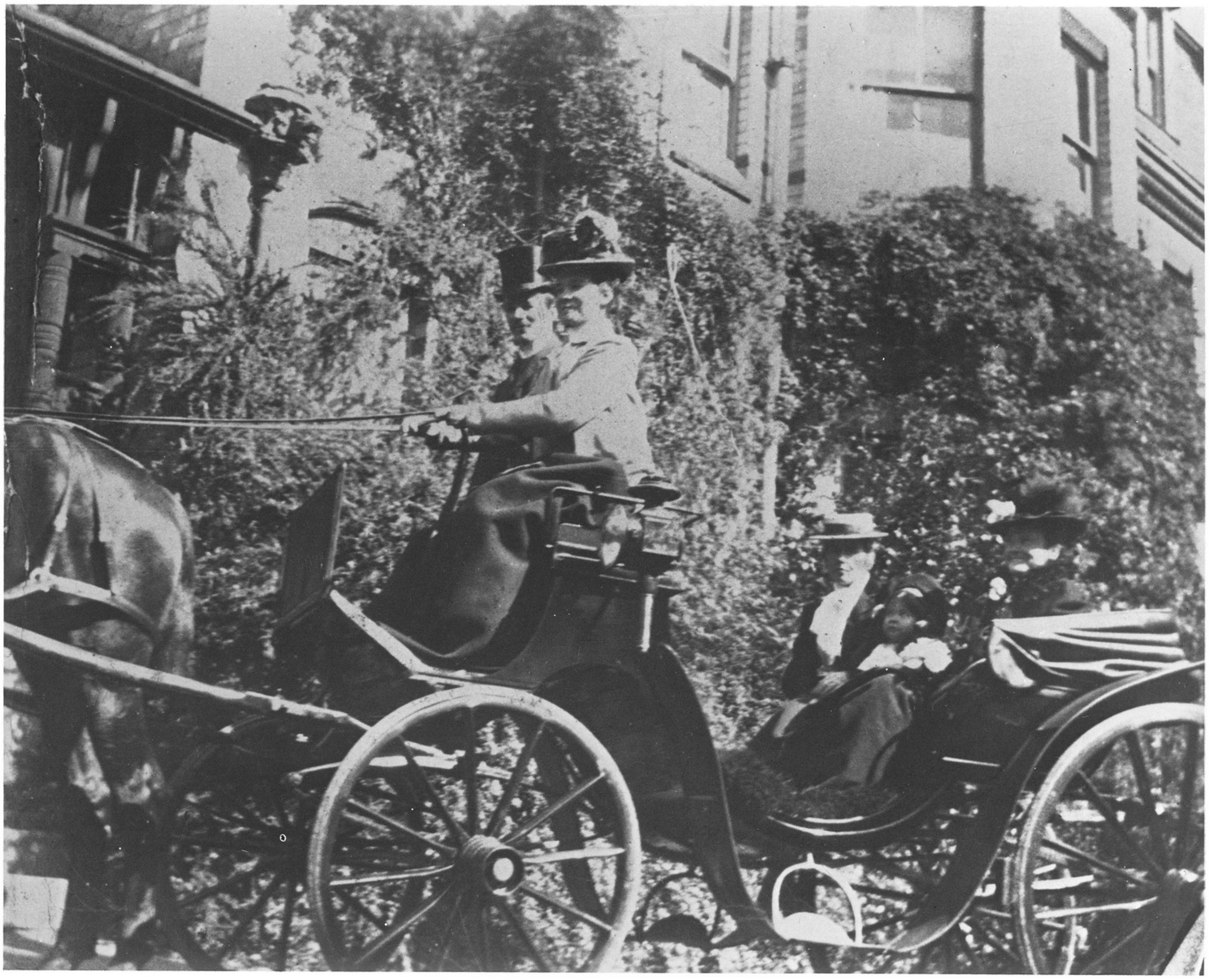
Daisy arrived on 31st December 1899. Clara told Vic that shortly after Daisy's birth, Sir Robert came to her room and asked, rather grumpily: "Another girl?"

"Yes," responded Clara. "And if you do not want to have more girls, you had best not have any more children because the chances are, half of them will be girls."

Vic always described Daisy as "a sad case." She developed pneumonia shortly before Henry also caught it. Clara, busy with the ailing Henry, had little time for her. "She had a childhood of no happiness," said Vic. Her adult life brought little joy. Her husband, a Cantonese businessman, took her away from Hong Kong to live with his family in Hankow. There he died a few years after the wedding and Daisy was left a widow with no children.

Eddie, Clara's favorite, was born in March 1902. He also was very sickly as a child and having already lost her eldest son Henry, Clara took special care with him. "Eddie couldn't bear the heat of Hong Kong so every year until we moved to the Peak mother took him to Japan away from the summer and we were left alone," said Vic. Eddie outgrew his childwood illnesses and later showed great courage and independence when he went off to England to study economics and secretly married an Irish girl, Mordia O'Shea. Sir Robert and Lady Clara only learned of the marriage when Eddie returned to Hong Kong to work at the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. Sir Robert was furious.

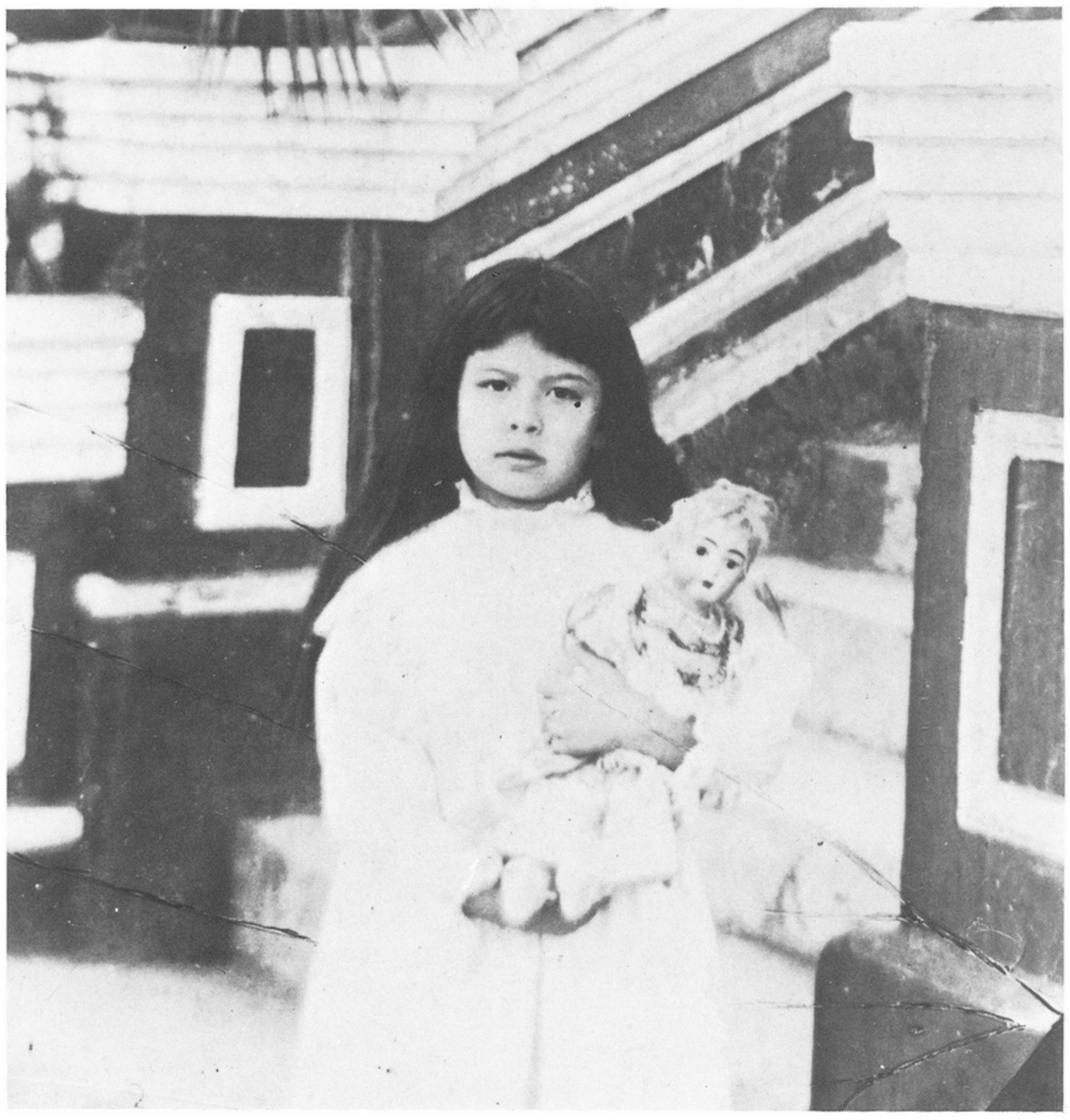
HENRY

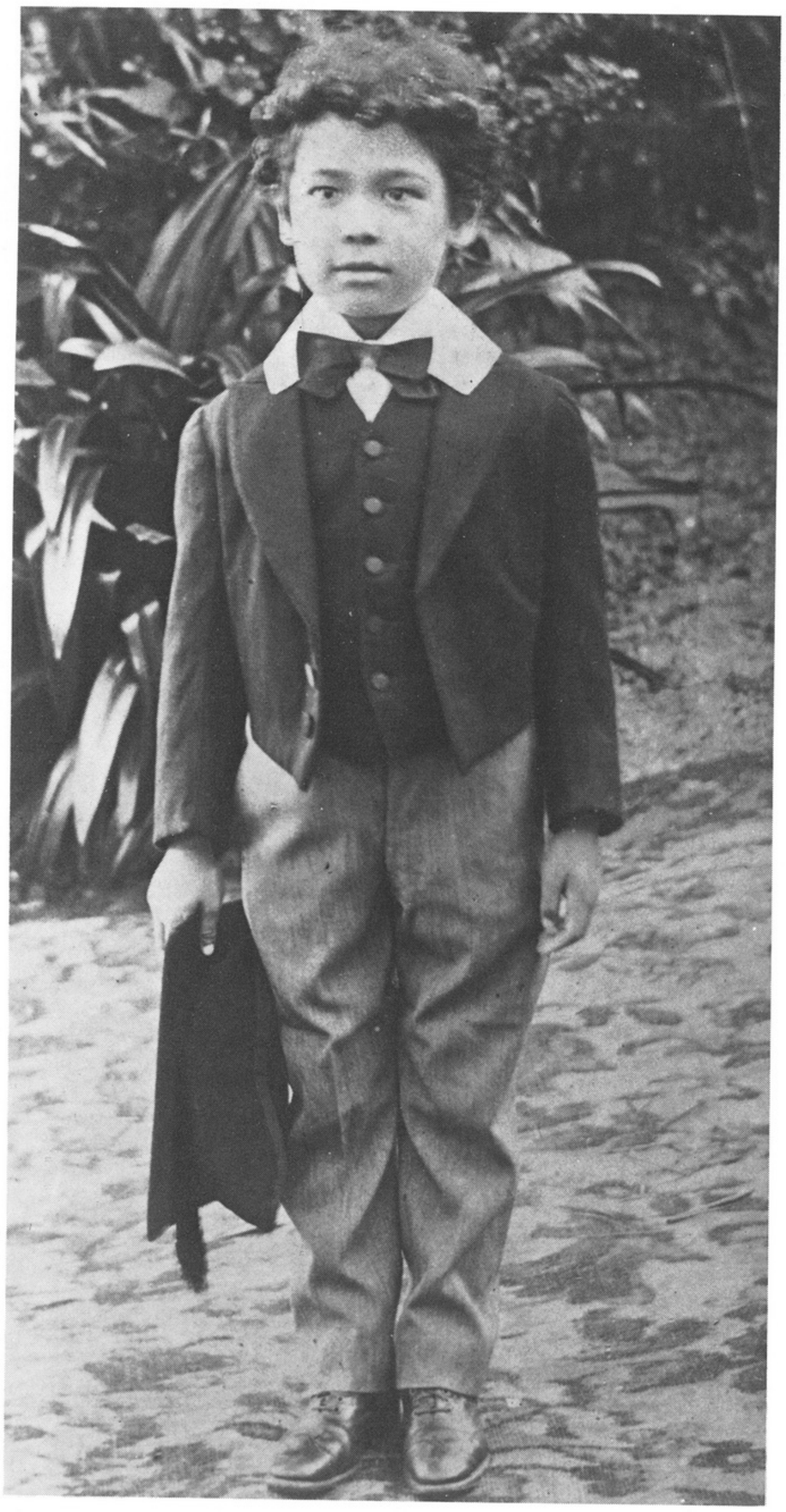


Turn-of-the-century London:
Lady Clara takes the reins while Victoria, squeezed between two chaperones, stares in awe at her daring mother.

A Princess Is Born

Victoria





Eva came in July 1903. She was courted for months by K.C. Yeo (楊國瑋), who later married Florence, but she never married and thus never received a dowry. After she qualified as a medical doctor, she approached Sir Robert and asked for the marriage money she would have received so she could set up her practice. Sir Robert, naturally, refused. That, however, did not prevent Eva from becoming a distinguished gynaecologist of her day.

Irene was born in 1904. She earned a Ph.D. in philosophy and became a recognized expert on Chinese education and culture. She wrote a charming book on her mother: "Clara Ho Tung: A Hong Kong Lady, Her Family and Her Times."

Robbie (Shai Lai) (何世禮) arrived in 1906. So that she too should have a son by him, Sir Robert sent Robbie to live with Lady Margaret and it was she who raised him. Eddie remained with Clara. After studying at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich*, at Fontainbleau in France and at Fort Leavenworth in the United States, Robbie joined the Kuomintang army and rose to the rank of general. For several years he represented the Nationalist Chinese United Nations Delegation on the U.N.'s Military Commission.

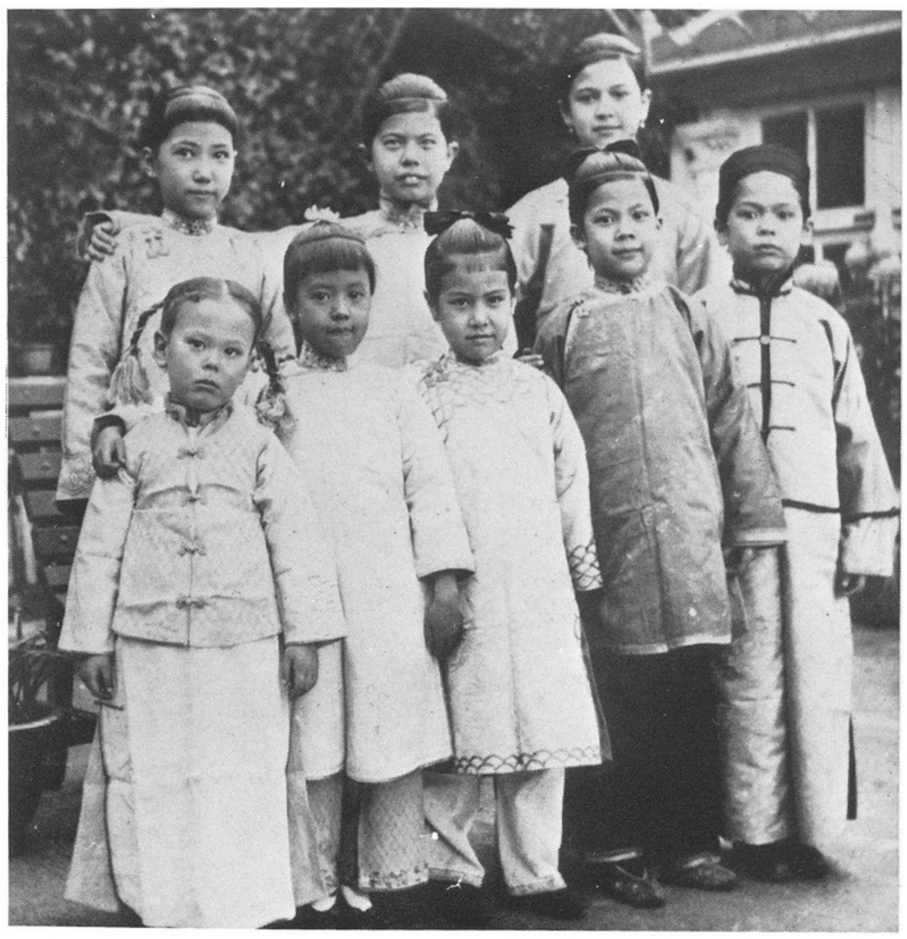
Uncle Eddie had the curls in the family. And he was also the family scholar.

Note: The Royal Military Academy at Woolwich in England was noted mainly for artillery and military engineering training. It was moved to Sandhurst in 1946.

Circa 1908. Back row: Daisy, Eddie, Eva and Victoria holding Jean. Front row: Irene and Robbie.

The Little Ho Tungs And How They Grew

Eva, Irene, Robbie and Vic in 1907



Circa 1910. Back row: Mary, Daisy and Vic. Front row: Robbie, Alexandra (one of Sai Wing's daughters), Irene, Eva and Eddie.

Eva, little Irene and Vic pose with Lady Clara's mother, affectionately nicknamed "Paw Paw." Circa 1907.

Lady Clara takes her daughters to tea with Lady Margaret at "Idlewild."

A group of little Ho Tungs gathers around Lady Margaret.

Daisy in the garden at Idlewild. And Jean on her 10th birthday in 1918.

Breaking The Peak Barrier

Shortly after Robbie's birth, Clara heard that the air on Hong Kong's Peak, 1,805 feet above sea level, was extremely healthy for growing children. Special permission was required from the Governor-in-Council to live in that exclusive residential district — reserved for Europeans until after World War II on the rationale that their constitutions were less accustomed to the steamy climate of the lower levels than were those of Chinese. It was a very thinly-veiled excuse for racial segregation and was bitterly resented by both the Chinese and other Asians in the Colony.

With the health of her children at stake, Clara was determined to move to the Peak and gave her husband little peace until he obtained the necessary permission. In 1906, he purchased three old fashioned bungalows and the Ho Tungs became the first Chinese family on the Peak.

The first Chinese baby born on the Peak was Jean, who arrived 18th April 1908. Jean married Billy Gittins and has written two books about her exciting life — "Eastern Windows, Western Skies" and "Behind Barbed Wire."

Grace was born in January 1910 shortly after the family's return from 18 months in San Francisco. She married Horace Lo, M.K.'s brother.

In 1915, Sir Robert and Clara took Victoria to the city of Tsingtao in Shantung province. There, to the surprise of all, Florence, named after Florence Nightingale, was born in August.

"It was a German hospital run by Dr. Paul Weischer who was treating Papa's stomach," Vic told me. "I was only 18 at the time but I was allowed to wear my hair up and I dressed in English clothes. Everyday, I would carry Florence to the hospital for her to be weighed and people would stop me and ask 'Oh, is that your baby?'

"Can you imagine the cheek of it."

Robbie, Irene, Eva, Eddie, Daisy and Victoria in 1907.

This turn-of-the-century photograph shows Clara in full Chinese dress and little Vic in the tiny raised slippers popular in the era. Ho Wing stands behind Clara and "Paw Paw", Clara's mother, is the third lady seated from the right.

Lady Clara's Story

Clara was strong-willed. In fact, as she got older she became something of a battle-axe. Her photographs show a woman who delighted in dressing up in both Chinese and Western clothes. She also loved to travel.

Vic was often taken along on trips with Sir Robert and Clara.

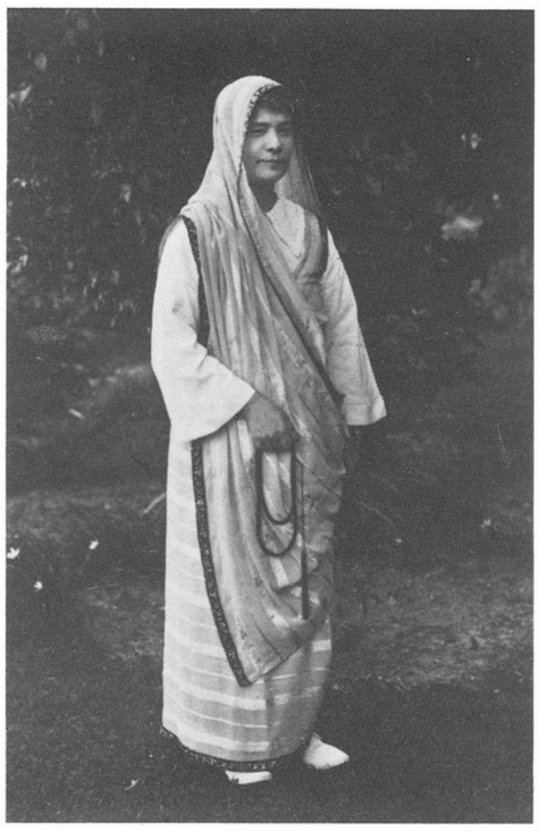
"We always wore European clothes when we went to Europe and Chinese clothes while travelling in China," Vic remembers. "But even in European clothes — how people stared at us. Not so many Chinese people went abroad in those days."

But Sir Robert travelled in style.

"The chairman of the Chinese railway was a schoolmate of Papa and on our trip to Peking in 1912 a luxury car was given over for our use," said Vic. "When it pulled into the station, Papa was all excited and leaned out the window to wave. The train stopped suddenly and Papa dislocated his hip. He made such a fuss and let everyone know what pain he was suffering ... so they unhooked the state carriage and put it at his disposal."

Clara's feet had been bound when she was very young — as George Ho says: "Eurasians in those days always tried to out-Chinese the Chinese" — but had been unbound shortly after her marriage. They gave her few problems and she could move about as she wished.

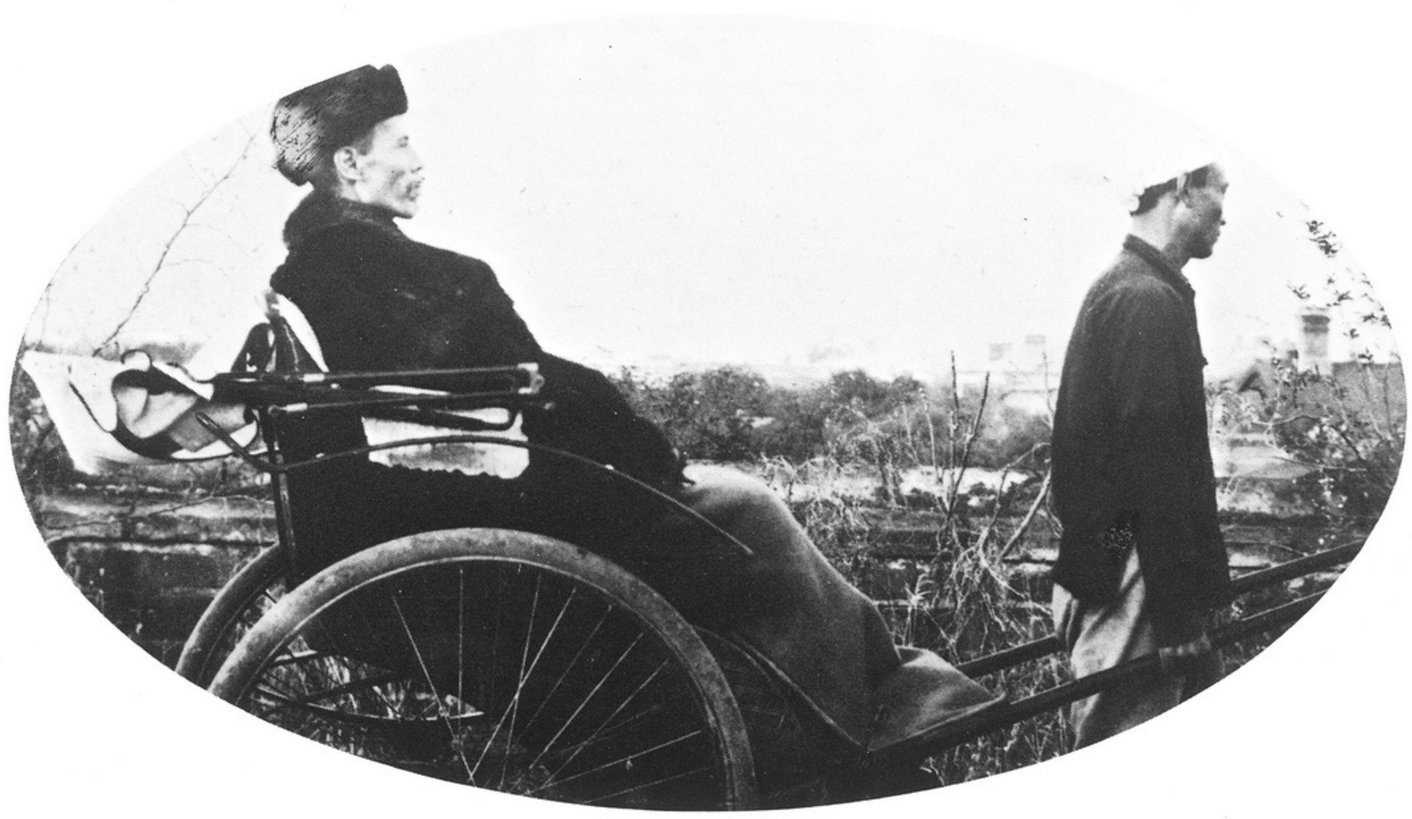
Lady Clara loved to travel and in 1927, at the age of 51, she set off on an ambitious voyage to England by way of Egypt. Joined by Irene, Eva and Dr. K.C. Yeo, who later married Florence, she gamely boarded a camel for a trip to the pyramids and a view of the Sphinx in February 1927.



Clara loved to dress up. She was as lovely in Western clothes as in an Indian sari.

But Clara was most beautiful in Chinese ceremonial finery. Sir Robert doted on her and had her photographed frequently.

Clara relished travel. She and Sir Robert toured China and Europe. And when Sir Robert travelled, he went in style — if not by sedan chair, then by rickshaw.



Clara was a devout Buddhist from childhood. She made many pilgrimages to isolated monastaries in China to consult with well-known high priests and in the 1930s she established the Po Kok Free School in Macao and the Po Kok Buddhist Seminary at Castle Peak in the New Territories.

In 1931, Sir Robert celebrated his Golden Anniversary with Lady Margaret and gave each of his wives an anniversary gift of $100,000. It was the windfall Lady Clara had been waiting for and she immediately hired artisans and architects to begin work on a Buddhist Temple and religious center for Hong Kong.

Her Tung Lin Kok Yuen Buddhist Temple, which still stands on Village Road, opened in May 1935 and the Po Kok School and the Po Kok Buddhist Seminary, as well as a library of Buddhist texts were moved to the Happy Valley site.

Vic has taken over the responsibility of the temple and its adjoining school and moved her home across the road so that she would be close by.

From the pictures, it is clear Sir Robert doted on Clara and there was little he could deny her. She was a woman you tended to worship. But she was also Clara the Invincible and she could be very nasty to anyone who stood in her way.

Though an extremely devout Buddhist, she did not spread her trust in man's honesty very thin. When she began to build the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Temple, she ordered workmen imported from Peking and expensive wood brought in for seasoning in the Lane Crawford storeroom. To make sure Lane Crawford didn't ''unwittingly'' use her wood for something else, she had each plank branded.

She died on 5th January 1938 at the age of 62. Both Sir Robert and Lady Margaret, who lived to the age of 79, survived her.

A devout Buddhist, Lady Clara devoted more and more of her time to her religious works as she got older. She became a vegetarian and would sit for hours praying in the lotus position — with a boy by her side to chase away the flies.

Lady Clara strolling above the "The Falls" in 1930. After years of having her family under at least three separate roofs, Lady Clara had yearned for a house large enough for her entire family to live together. But by the time The Falls was completed, most of the Ho Tung children had married or gone abroad to study and she was often the mansion's sole occupant.

December 2nd 1931. Sir Robert and Lady Margaret celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary. The celebration of Sir Robert's marriage to Lady Margaret 50 years before in 1881 brought Clara the windfall she had been praying for — $100,000.
Front row: Vera, Clara, Margaret and Phoebe.
Middle row: Wilbur, Mrs. Ho Wing, Vic, Sir Robert, Robbie's wife Hesta and Irene.
Back row: Aunt Mary, Florence, Mary's husband Wong Sik Lam, a Ho Wing daughter, Aunt Jean's husband Billy Gittins, a Ho Wing daughter, Ho Wing and M.K.

Lady Clara was rarely seen without one of her rosaries — even when holding her five-day-old grandson Tak Shing.

Vic and M.K. take Lady Clara for a stroll in October 1937

Sir Robert leads the mourners at Lady Clara's funeral in January 1938. There was always a nurse at his elbow.

Lady Clara fulfilled a lifetime dream when she built the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Buddhist Temple, which still stands on Village Road and is an active center of religious study. Today, Vic is its patroness.

Summer 1948: Victoria and Irene joined Sir Robert at memorial ceremonies at the temple school in Happy Valley.

Victoria Jubilee's Story

My mother, as all who know her can attest, is a gentle but tough lady. Growing up as the eldest daughter of Sir Robert Ho Tung, she couldn't be any other way.

There was little time for the children in Sir Robert's household — he and he alone was the center of attention. Sir Robert firmly believed that a father's role was not to talk to his children or lavish affection on them — but to make money for them.

His isolation was ensured after the move to the Peak when the family was separated into three different houses — an old fashioned wooden house called The Chalet and two sprawling bungalows named Dunford and The Neuk. Each house had only three bedrooms and so Clara and the children moved into The Chalet and Dunford, which were separated by the tennis courts upon which my father later courted my mother. A few hundred yards across a private path was The Neuk which Sir Robert occupied when he came to the Peak. On these occasions, he would send for the children on Sunday morning, shake each of their little hands and bestow a gental parental kiss. If he was feeling well, he would invite them for "tiffin", the mid-day meal.

Lady Clara spent most of her time attending to her husband and much of the rest was devoted to her religious duties.

Among the older Ho Tung children, Lady Clara's mother — or "Paw Paw" to Vic — was their real mother. It was to her that they turned with their skinned knees or broken hearts.

"She treated me more as a daughter than a granddaughter," said Vic. "She was very kindhearted. She ran our house better than my mother."

Victoria Jubilee: She was a lovely if sometimes lonely little princess.

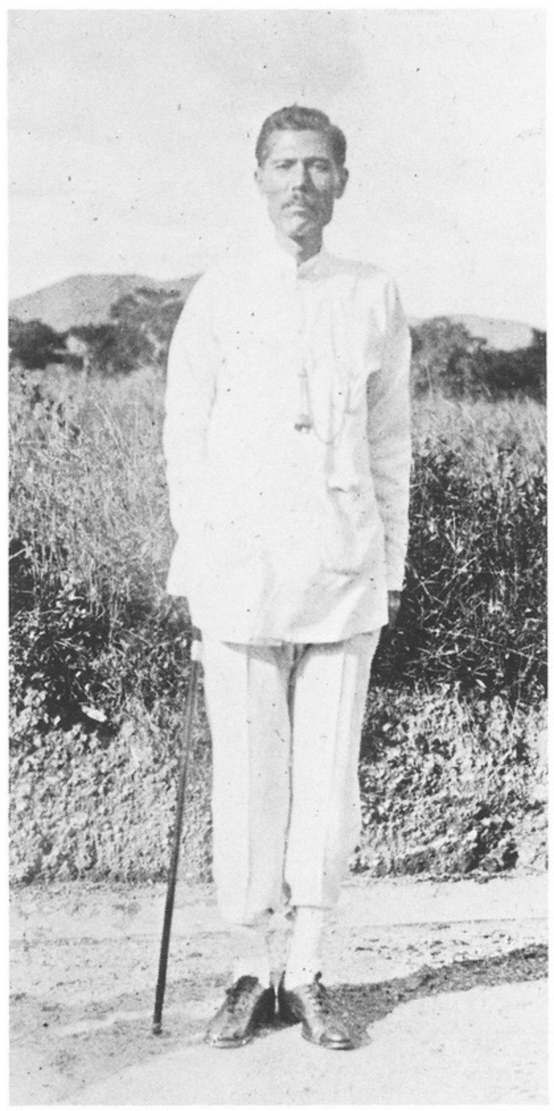
Victoria and her Miss So. The princess was not always so very pampered.

Vic was only 12 when she left school but she never stopped studying. "We were going to America aboard the Pacific Mail and I was already in the top class so it wasn't really so bad," she said. "Afterwards I taught myself."

"We went to San Francisco and set up house at 3382 Clay Street — a four-storey house as I well remember since I had the pleasure of cleaning it," said Vic. "Papa didn't use checks in those days and I remember going out, whether to buy a house with Papa or doing the shopping for the house, and having to carry bags and bags of cash."

When Paw Paw died on the second day of the Chinese New Year in 1912, Vic, being the eldest, took over the household. "It wasn't such hard work — we had 40 servants," laughed Vic.

Besides looking after the younger children and doing all the shopping for the large Ho Tung family, she was assigned all Sir Robert's and Lady Clara's correspondence. "In those days there was no typing so I wrote everyone by hand," she said.



The Customs Of The Patriarch

To insure against being disturbed, Sir Robert very early began the custom of requiring any who wished to see him first to put their reasons in writing and then to wait for an appointment for the audience. This system was doubly enforced with the grandchildren and my contacts with Sir Robert were few and far between.

Before and after the war, which he spent in Macao, Sir Robert used Idlewild as his main residence. We often visited him there and I remember the resident blind girl, Lin Goo, who gave him massages everyday. This amazing masseuse is still giving massages to Victoria, who is 87.

Mother was in a privileged position since she had acted as Sir Robert's private secretary before her marriage and remained his confidante. She would arrange for me to be presented about once a month. One had to tiptoe up the stairs very quietly. He was always sleeping and it was disastrous to wake him up. While waiting for my audiences, I remember playing in the layers of gardens with Eric Ho Tung, Eddie's son, who taught me judo. He was older and used to petrify me.

Once, when I was already at school in England, I received a rare letter from Sir Robert — written by one of the nurses since he always did things through other people — asking me to do some research into the viability of buying or setting up a chain of Chinese restaurants in London. With visions of supping in London's best Chinese restaurants dancing in my head, I immediately wrote back suggesting that he should send me the necessary money for proper research. He never replied — evidently the investigation became less attractive when he found it was not going to be entirely free.

Another encounter took place while I was home on holiday from school. Sir Robert handed to me during my audience with him a list of books that I was to read during the summer — all old Chinese classics. I knew I might be quizzed on the books but I tossed aside the list anyway — I was fairly certain he had not read any of them himself. Sure enough, before I returned to England, he granted me another audience, asked me a few vague questions about the books and nodded sagely at my equally vague answers.

There was only one thing Sir Robert feared more than a disturbance to his delicate constitution — and that was people asking for money.

Curious initials may be found in his private diary: "AVEM" and "MEM". Someone later learned from one of his nurses that these stood for "a very embarrassing moment" and "most embarrassing moment." These usually were inscribed, the nurse said, after he had turned away somone trying to borrow money.

Sir Robert insisted upon being the centre of attention ... Clara often read to him and when he was ill, she would read him to sleep. But she had to be very careful as the slightest noise, even the whisper of a turning page, would wake him.

Sir Robert's birthdays were always treated as royal events. His 60th birthday in December 1922 prompted this small family gathering. M.K. holds month-old Wilbur.

George Ho lived with Sir Robert at "Idlewild", the matrimonial home for Lady Margaret at No. 8 Seymour Road, and worked for the Old Man collecting his rents. He was paid a pittance HK$350 a month. He never dared ask for a raise despite the protestations of Jessie who kept agitating and demanding: "Why don't you ask the Old Man for more?"

One day Jessie couldn't stand it anymore and said: "I'm going to see the Old Man myself."

George nervously paced up and down during Jessie's audience. He was sure he would be fired from his job and his family would be thrown out into the street. His fears quickened when his wife returned absolutely buoyant.

"He's agreed to give you a raise," she said. "The trouble with you is you don't try."

George, who knew the Old Man better, was terrified. "Oh, God," he thought, "what form will the punishment take?"

The answer came the following day. George received a demand for HK$200 a month in rent — $100 more than the salary increase. But George was relieved — the extent of the damage was at last known. And Jessie had learnt her lesson.

A Family Reunion

Sir Robert mellowed as he got older and for his 90th birthday he decided — in a rush of generous sentiment — to gather his entire family around him for a celebration.

The family by this time had grown considerably. Lady Clara had borne him 10 children, who had added nearly a score of grandchildren and a football team of great-grandchildren to the family. In addition there were adopted Uncle Sai Wing and his 10 children and Aunt Mary and her son David Wong.

Lady Margaret need not have worried about her beloved husband going without an heir.

Airline tickets were dispatched around the world — together with the command to be present on the great day: December 22, 1952. The ticket that reached me at school in England was a real treat for trips home were few and far between. I was sent to school in England when I was 16 and in the nine years I was there I only returned home three times.

Aunt Florence's son Richard and I were both at King's College at Taunton, Somerset when the parade home began. Also coming from England were Aunt Grace and Cousin Shirley Lo, who was then studying dentistry at the University of London, and Vera, her husband Hui Yin Kan and baby Geoffrey.

Uncle Robbie and Aunt Hesta flew in from Taipei and Aunt Jean Gittins came all the way from Australia with her children John and Elizabeth. A big contingent came from America — Phoebe and her family from California, Bobbie Ho from New York where he was studying journalism and Eddie's daughters Toni and Mary.

I remember Vic filling the traditional red lacquered boxes with her birthday greetings — fruits, ''long-life'' noodles, and buns in the shape of peaches, another symbol of long life.

The dinners, dances and fireworks went on for several days and scores of callers were ushered through the halls of Idlewild to pay their respects to Sir Robert.

Sir Robert's December 1952 summons for the celebration of his 90th birthday was a welcome reprieve from study in England. Vic, M.K. and Rita were there when I got home.

December 22nd 1952: The Grand Celebration

Grandfather's generosity even on that occasion had its limits as my sister Phoebe was one of the first to learn.

Phoebe and her husband Howard Brown had flown all the way from California to pay their respects. With them was their son Brian, whose bright red hair caught the Old Man's eye. After the party, Sir Robert granted the Browns an audience. While he spoke to Phoebe, he allowed little Brian to play with the tiny gold bell he kept on his desk for summoning nurses, secretaries and servants.

"If you like this little bell come back tomorrow morning at 6 and I shall make you a gift of one," Sir Robert said, smiling at his carrot-haired great-grandson.

Phoebe couldn't have been more pleased — first that Sir Robert had singled out her son and second that Brian should have such a lovely and valuable souvenir of his famous great-grandfather.

The family dutifully reported at 6 a.m. and found a nurse waiting with a small, prettily-wrapped package. Inside was a little bell, an exact replica of the one Sir Robert kept on his desk — except it was made of brass.

Phoebe and her husband Howard Brown arrived from California with carrot-haired Brian and tiny Cassie. Vera and Kan brought little Geoffrey. So we all got together with Rita, Vic and M.K. for this family portrait. That's Brian leaning on Vic's knee, while M.K. holds Geoffrey and Howard has Cassie in his arms. Phoebe is pregnant with Bertram.

The reunions went on for days. Here are Hui Yin Kan and Vera, Rita and her husband Rudy Khoo, and cousin Mary Ho Tung (Ketterer), Uncle Eddie's daughter, with me.

My father loved to tell stories about Sir Robert's driving. The Old Man enjoyed driving but he had an adversion to using the rearview mirror or looking backwards when he reversed. For this chore, he would take his handyman, Ah Bing, along on his afternoon drives.

One day Ah Bing was helping the Old Man reverse.

"Ho la, dai-yun. Ho la. Ho la," said Ah Bing, politely giving directions. Unfortunately, the Chinese can mean either "Very good, old revered one." or "Enough, enough, old revered one."

On this day, Ah Bing meant enough. Sir Robert, who rarely heard anything but praise for whatever he was doing, took it for granted that Ah Bing meant "very good." The more Ah Bing shouted "ho la" the more pleased he was — until he rammed the car into a lamp post.

Despite his complaints of fragile health, Sir Robert often declared his intention of becoming a centenarian. But in the spring of 1956 he developed pleurisy, complicated by pneumonia. He died a few weeks later at the age of 93.

Before his death, Sir Robert had carefully arranged his own funeral procession. According to plan, the cortege wound through Central district and stopped in front of Jardines, where the directors dutifully trooped out onto the street to bow in a gesture of respect. The retinue then moved on to the Hong Kong Bank where the bank taipans waited for more of the same.

Sir Robert was buried alongside Lady Margaret in the old colonial cemetery in Happy Valley — a resting place he considered more stylish than the private Chiu Yuen Cemetery at Pokfulam reserved by him for the extended family.

Whatever else one says about him, Sir Robert was a man of style and there was an aura of greatness about him.

Lo Cheung Shiu was an old-style Chinese gentleman whose word was his bond. As his sons wrote in their memorial to him after his death on 30th June 1934, "during the last 20 years or so of his life, he was universally looked upon in the Colony as one of the Elder Statesmen who always acted according to the dictates of his conscience, and in accordance with right and justice as he saw it, without fear or favour; and his word always carried great weight."

The Lo Family

Among the Ho Tungs' closest friends were Lo Cheung Shiu (羅祥肇) and his wife Shi Sheung Hing (史湘卿). They had served as godparents to Eddie and Grandfather Lo was the brother of Uncle Ho Fook's wife.

Lo Cheung Shiu was born on the 8th of January 1869 and, like Sir Robert, had attended the Hong Kong Government Central School, later known as Queen's College. His mother, Tsang Yau (曾氏), helped him secure his first job in 1887 as a teacher earning the princely sum of HK$10 a month.

In 1892, Grandfather Lo went into government service as a clerk in the Treasury and two years later joined the Comprador Department of Messrs. Jardine, Matheson and Company as an assistant to Robert Ho Tung. In 1918, he was named the titular head of that department until his retirement in 1920.

Shi Sheung Hing, known to us as Grandmother Lo. She bore Grandfather Lo four sons and five daughters. Her somewhat shy husband worshipped this dainty lady and her death in 1927 was a blow from which he never recovered.

In 1886, he married Shi Sheung Hing who bore him four sons — Man Kam (M.K.), Man Wai (M.W.), Man Hin (M.H.) and Man Ho (Horace) — and five daughters — Edna (Mrs. Ho Leung), Doris (Mrs. Ho Ki), Eileen (Mrs. Charles Choa), Enid (Mrs. John Litton) and Gertrude (Mrs. Kenneth Chaun).

Grandmother Lo's death on 10th December 1927 was a terrible blow. But Grandfather Lo remained active in the management of the China Light and Power Company and the Tai Yau Bank, of which he was one of the original founders, and on the boards of the Tung Wah Hospital and Po Leung Kuk until his death on 30th June 1934 of cancer.

An Old World gentleman and a self-made man, he accomplished, said one of his friends after he died, "the extraordinary feat for a successful business man of leaving behind no enemies and no resentments — nothing but a gracious memory..."

And, as Sir Robert wrote M.K. at the time: "He died as he lived, loved by many and respected by all."

Grandfather Lo

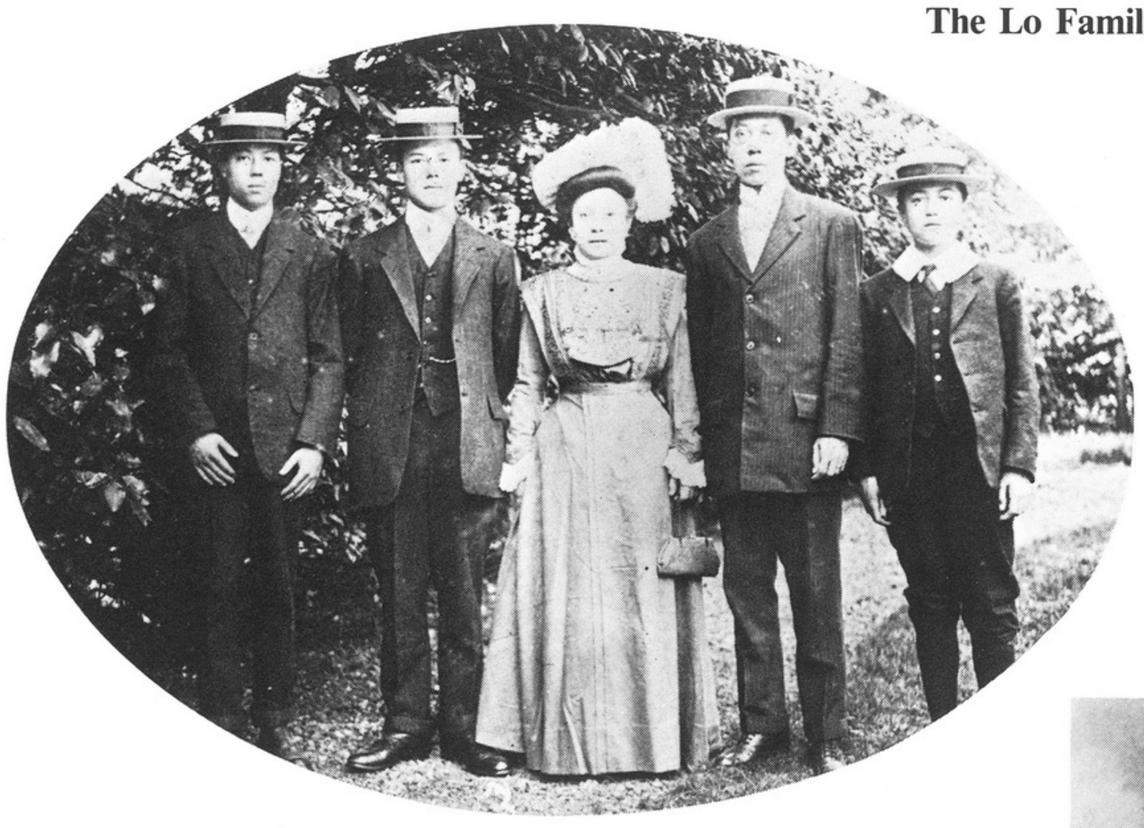
Grandmother Lo

Grandmother Lo and Her Family
Chinese families have very special terminology to distinguish between the various family relationships, and the seniority within the family is always made quite clear. Grandmother Lo was born Shi Sheung Hing but her family name was also Zimmern — a name adopted by her Younger Brother No.4, Shi Charn Kwong. Vic has many fond memories of "Old Lady Shi", Grandmother Lo's mother, who was best friends with Paw Paw and Sir Robert's mother. The three Grandes Dames were like sisters and loved to take Victoria to tea parties to show her off to the other old ladies of Hong Kong. "They all loved Victoria because she was so well-mannered and so pretty," Aunt Irene says.
Vic remembers that "Old Lady Shi" had a house on Caine Road and would stand at her window each day to wave at Victoria as she passed on her way to school in a rickshaw.
From left: Grandmother Lo; Elder Sister No.1 who married Sir Jacob Sassoon and adopted the Chinese name Mrs. Sun; Ethel, later Mrs. Ho Iu and the eldest daughter of Shi Bing Kwong; Younger Brother No.4, Shi Charn Kwong, also known as C.K. Zimmern; Sun King Cheung, the son of Elder Sister No.1 and also known as Master K.C. Sassoon; The Matriarch of the Shi family and Grandmother Lo's mother; Edna Lo, M.K.'s elder sister: Elder Brother No.2, Shi Bing Kwong; Elder Sister-in-law No.2 or Mrs. Shi Bing Kwong; Young Sister-in-law No.4 or Mrs. Shi Charn Kwong.

M.W. LO

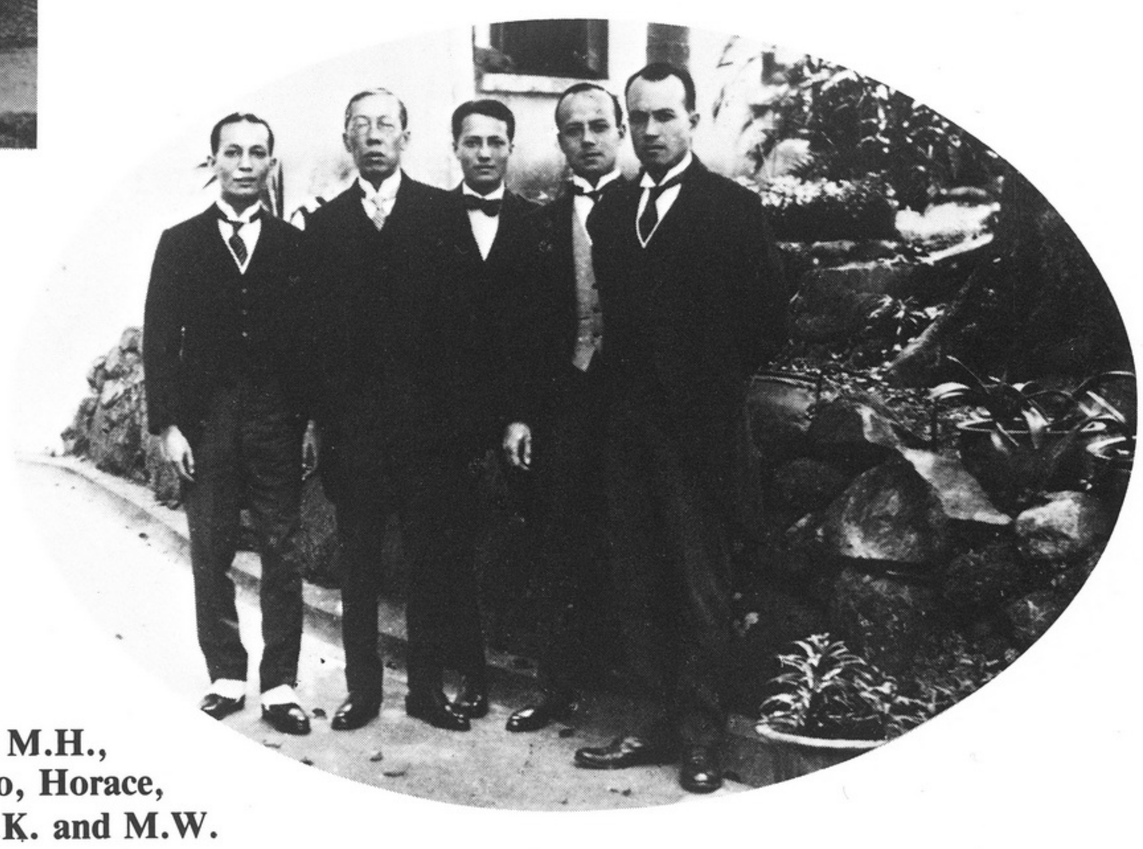
HORACE LO

The Lo Family takes a stroll



M.W. and M.K. circa 1905

The three Lo's M.H., M.K. and M.W circa 1905.



The Lo men: M.H., Grandfather Lo, Horace, M.K. and M.W.

A swimming party at the Lo's

M.K.

Man Kam Lo (羅文錦), or M.K. as he was known throughout his life, was the eldest of the Lo sons and was born on 21st July 1893. In 1906, when he was only 12 his parents sent him and his brother, Uncle M.W., to school in England where, it was decreed, he would study law. It was a hard thing to do to such a young boy — particularly one who knew almost no English. But M.K. did extremely well.

Just before his final examinations, M.K. received word that his mother was dying of a kidney ailment and had only six months to live. It turned out to be a false alarm, and she lived 12 more years until 10 December 1927 — four days before Vera was born.

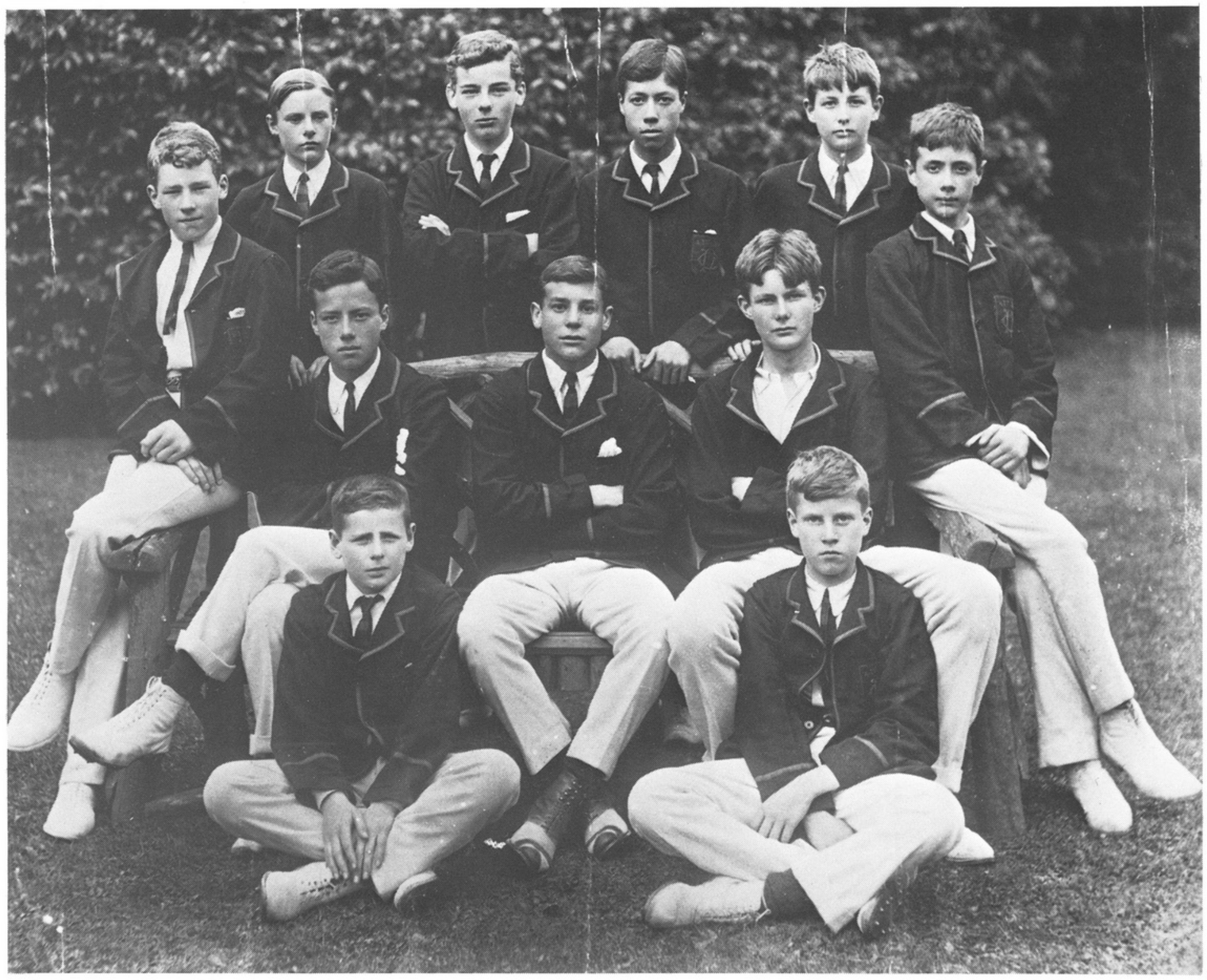
But M.K. was distraught and immediately after his exams, he boarded a ship for home. While on board he received a telegram from Uncle M.W. with word that he had not only passed but had won a slew of honours including the Blue Ribbon for having come first in First Class Honours in the Solicitors Final Examination — the first and only man from Hong Kong to have done so.

All his prize books were lost a few months later when the ship carrying them was sunk by a torpedo of the First World War.

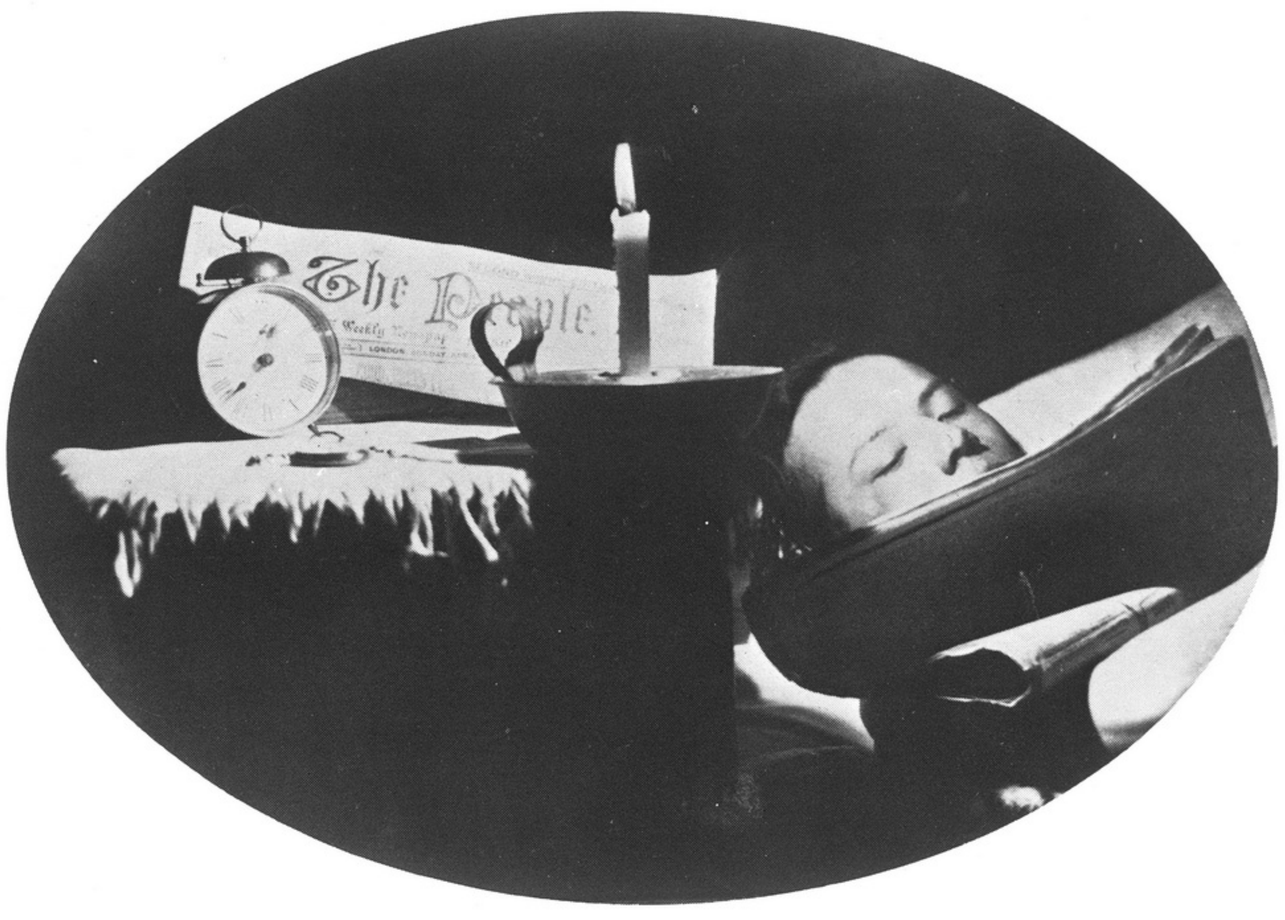
Immediately after his return to Hong Kong in 1915, he founded Lo and Lo. He was only 23.

In February 1906, M.K. donned his schoolboy cap and joined a group of young Hong Kong boys — all looking as sad and forlorn as he — for this farewell photograph.
Setting sail for faraway schools in faraway England were:
Front row: Wong Shek Man, Wong Shek To, M.W. Lo, Wong Shek Lam and Ho Kai.
Back row: Lo Man Pun, Ho Sai Kit, Ho Chuen and M. K. Lo

Within a few months at his new school, he had adapted to his strange, new surroundings and was once again the suave, young gentleman as one can see from this class picture. That's M.K. on the left in the middle row.



M.K. in 1915 after coming first in First Class Honours.



M.K. in England circa 1914.
He studied into the wee hours...

M.K.

M.K. And Victoria

Sir Robert immensely respected M.K. Lo and took note of his accomplishments. When he got interested in choosing a husband for his eldest, and favourite, daughter. He put his seal of approval on M.K.

Throughout the rest of the Old Man's life, he often sought M.K.'s counsel — but M.K. was one of the few people in the family who never asked him for anything.

Though M.K. tried very hard to hide it and never said a word against Sir Robert, it was clear that he could not reciprocate the respect his father-in-law

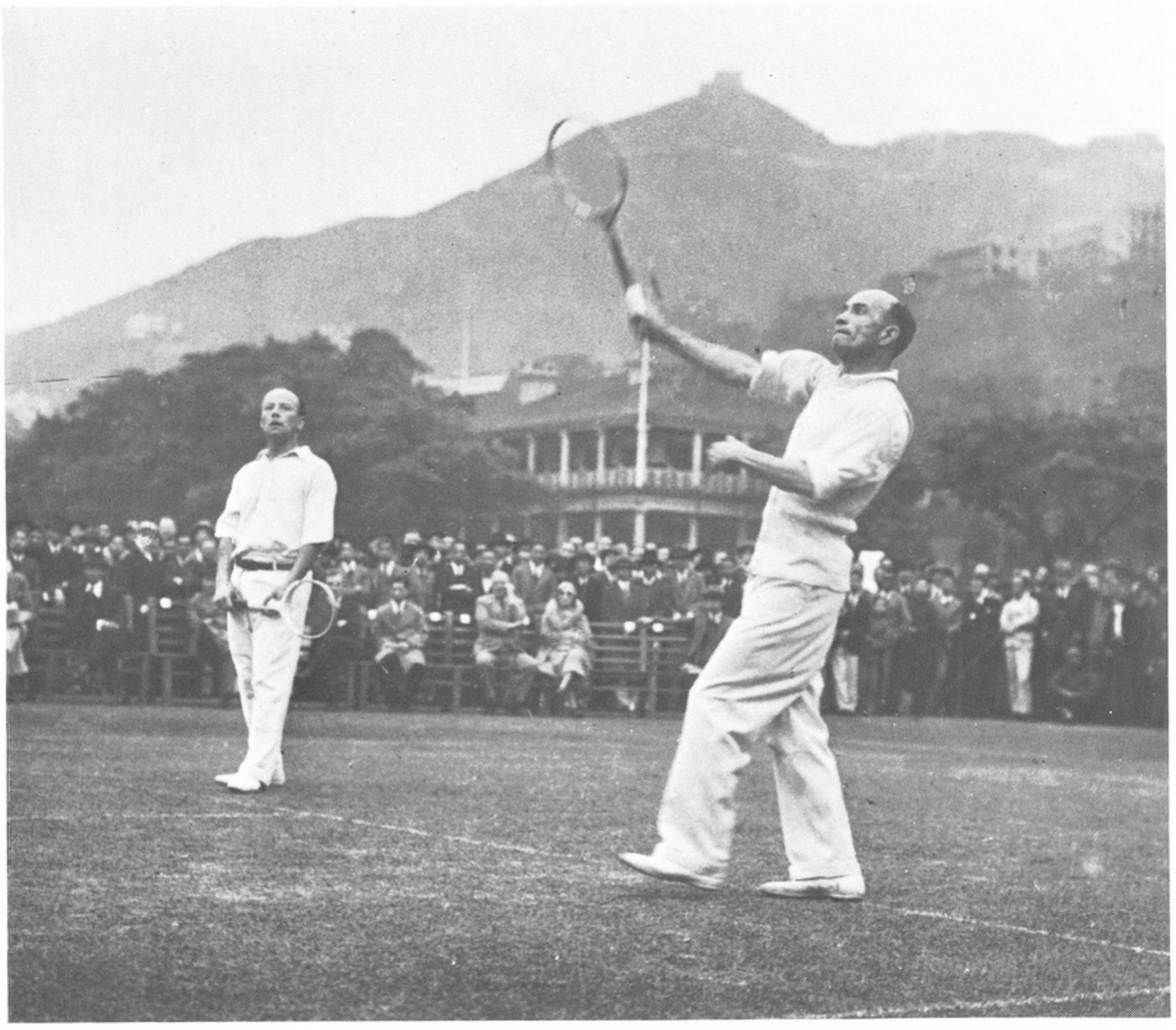
felt. In fact, as George Ho puts it, "M.K. had very little use for the old hypocrite."

The marriage of Man Kam Lo and Victoria Jubilee Ho Tung was arranged by their families — like the matches of all respectable families in those days.

"I had no say in it at all," Vic asserts, though one cannot imagine her bowing — even to the will of Sir Robert — to a match which displeased her.

Dr. Thomas of Tung Wah hospital, our family doctor for many years and the father of my best boyhood friend, was also, if rather shyly, courting Victoria. All her friends teased her that she would end up with a bald husband — neither M.K. nor Dr. Thomas was overly endowed with hair.

Vic says Dr. Thomas never got up the courage to ask Sir Robert for her hand — and just as well. She had already made up her mind.

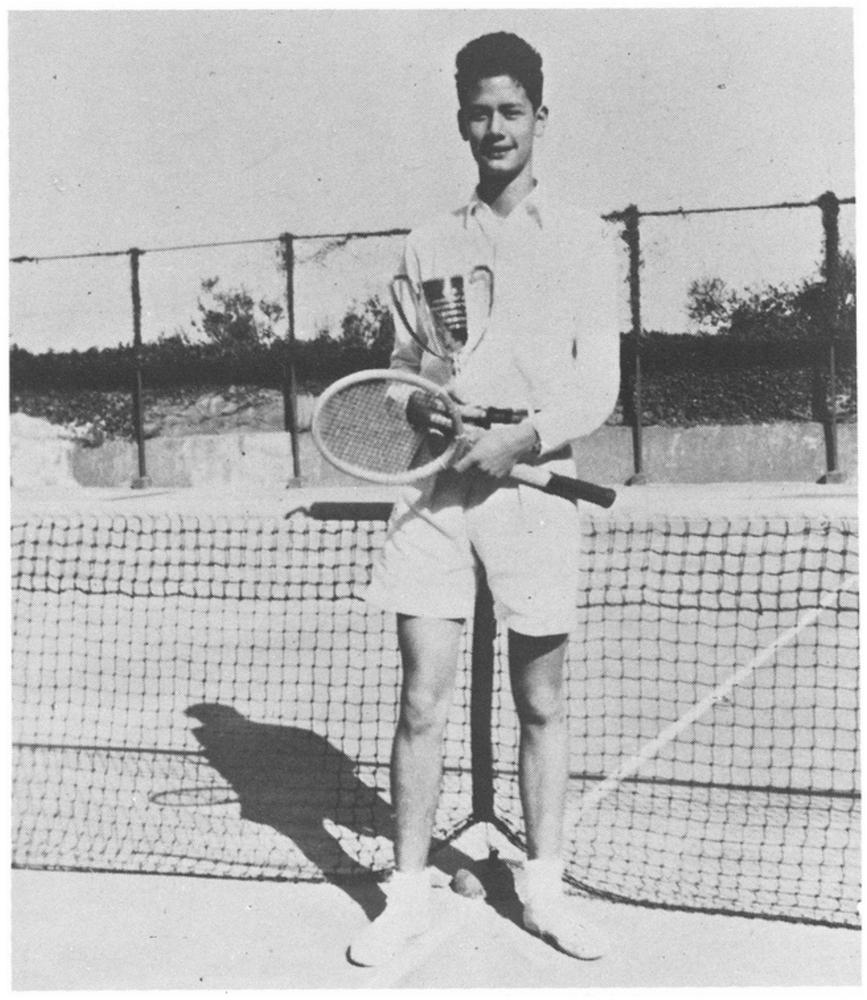


M.K. and M.W. acing out the opposition at the Semi-finals of the Open Championships Doubles in 1936.

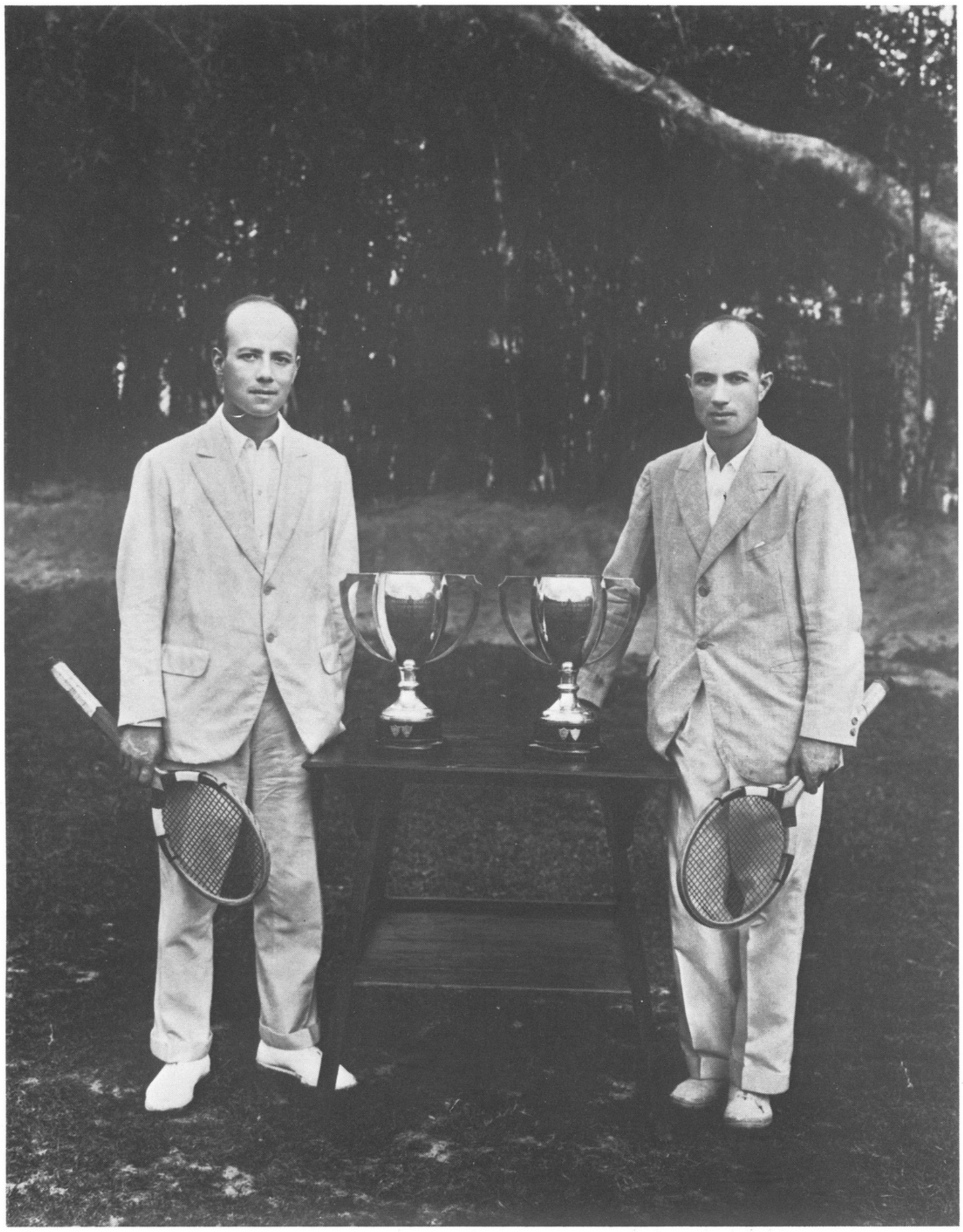
Tennis Anyone?

January 1937: At the age of two, I was ready to take on anyone who would accept the challenge.

Ready for a game of doubles against Vera and Rita in 1947.



Carrying on the Lo tradition: With my Schoolboy Champion of Hong Kong cup in July 1951.



Tennis champions M.K. and M.W. in 1931 with yet another set of cups.

Vic remembers the courting ritual vividly.

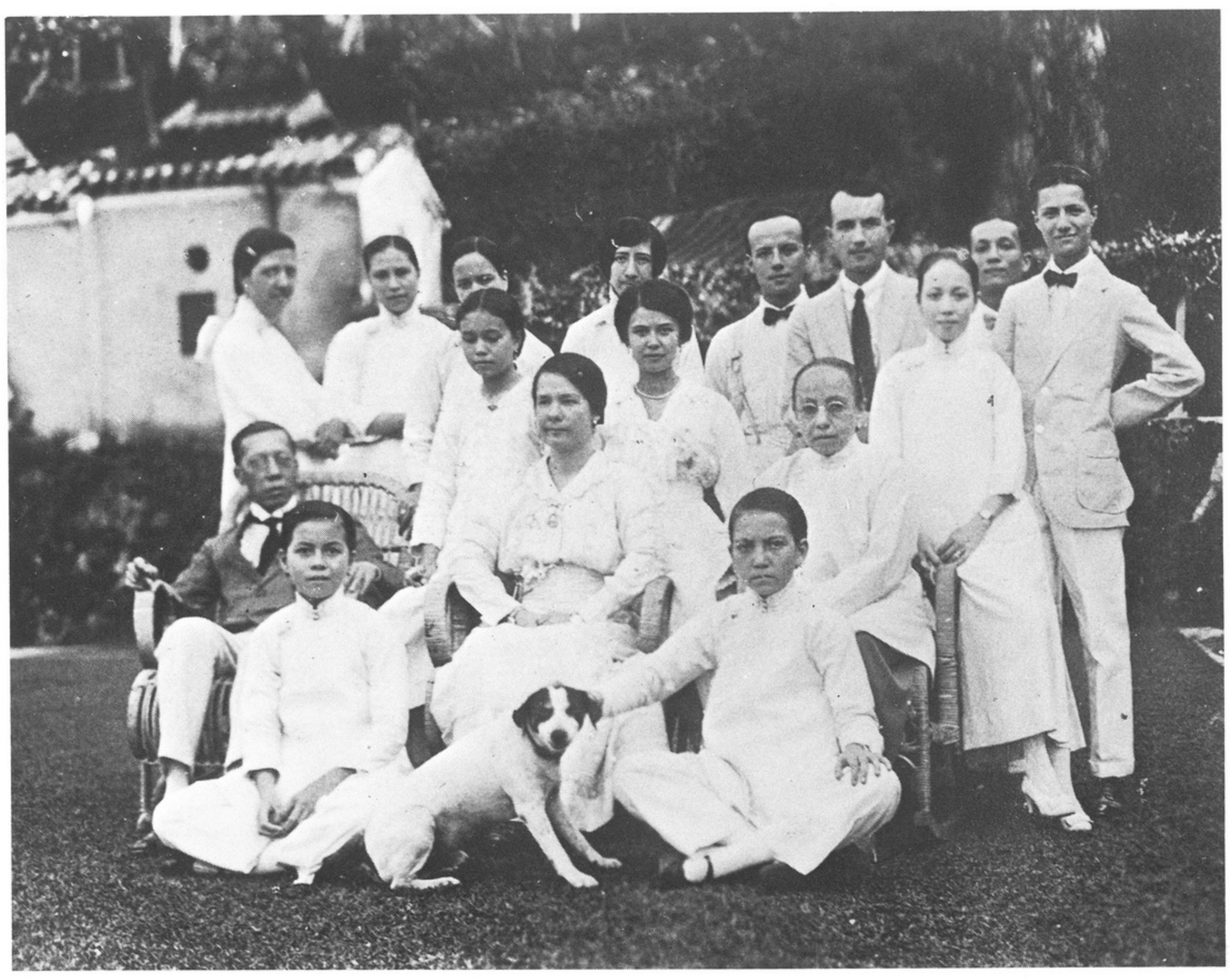
"Lady Margaret was in residence at Idlewild and my father bought two houses on the Peak for us. One was an old-fashioned, two-storey house called The Chalet and the other was a bungalow called Dunford House. There was no airconditioning or any motorcars in those days — to get home one had to take a rickshaw or a sedan chair to the tram," said Vic. "Between The Chalet and Dunford House, were two sets of tennis courts."

Since M.K. was a recognized sportsman and a tennis champion, the two families agreed the courtship should begin on the open tennis courts. Grace and Jean were deputed to chase balls and M.K. began the task of teaching Vic the game.

"It was an impossible job, I was so stupid," Vic always said with a chuckle. "He and his brother M.W. were very good players indeed. The top in Hong Kong. Tennis was his favorite sport."*

Note: M.K. and M.W. won the Hong Kong Open Tennis Championships Doubles in 1929, 1930 and 1931. In line with family tradition, Chung Yu To and I won the Under 18 Doubles in 1950 before I went to England.

Vic joins the Lo Family



The Lo clan gathered around Lady Clara

M.K. and Vic . . . the courtship was a happy time for them both

though there were rarely fewer than two chaperones on guard — and sometimes even the indomitable Lady Clara went along for the ride.

The newlyweds in their formal wedding portrait with the family of the bride. Grace and Jean were flower girls and Vic chose Irene as her Maid of Honour.
Back row: Daisy, Lady Margaret, Sir Robert, Eva
Middle row: M.K., Vic, Lady Clara, Irene
Front row: Jean and Grace

The Wedding of The Year

The wedding on April 4th 1918 at Idlewild was THE social event of the year. A group of M.K.'s friends gave a tiffin the night before to celebrate what they called "the last phase of his bachelor independence." On the menu were iced caviare, partridge broth, fish a la meuniere, tournedos rachel, roast turkey and ham, iced asparagus and fresh strawberries.

Vic, who always seemed to consider fashion a frivolous waste of time, remembers every detail of her wedding gown. It was, she told my sisters, made of white charmeuse and white Georgette crepe trimmed with rich lace and chiffon. The train was of the same material but her French-style veil was of white silk net with orange blossoms. She carried white roses and orange blossoms.

Aunt Irene was the Maid of Honour and Jean and Grace, who later married M.K.'s brother Horace, were the Bridesmaids in pink Georgette dresses trimmed with silver lace and pink shoes and hats to match. They carried, Vic said, baskets of pink sweetpeas.

Everyone who was anyone — including the Governor, Sir Henry May and his A.D.C., P.P.J. Wodehouse, * was there.

Note: "P.P.J. Wodehouse" should not be confused with the famous British humourist P.G. Wodehouse, who also actually once lived in Hong Kong and worked at the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank.

And with the family of the groom. Front row: Grandfather Lo, M.K., Victoria and Grandmother Lo. Middle row (left to right): Gertie, Eileen, Edna, Doris and Enid. Back row: M.W., Edna's husband Ho Leung, Horace and M.H.

M.K. and Vic: Still in love in 1928.

Sir Henry gave the toast, lavishing praise first on Sir Robert, second on Lady Clara "... and then there is the bride.

"You have only to look at her to envy the bridegroom. I have seen her grow up here in our midst. I am proud of her as a product of Hongkong. She is not only good to look upon but she is well accomplished. If any of you wish to test her fluency in the English and French languages you are quite at liberty to do so. I am informed also that she has a pretty taste in music and is considerably accomplished in that art.

"Then there is the bridegroom. He has been educated in England where he distinguished himself considerably in the field of sport and recreation and after being articled to a well known firm of solicitors he carried off the solicitors' blue riband, the Clement's Inn prize. We are all therefore to be proud to have him here in our midst and now that he was won so fair a bride it should help and animate him to further great successes in his profession.

"If as an old man and a father I might give him a little advice ... It is easy to make a woman happy if you remember two little points. The first is to treat

her always with real unselfishness ... not giving up things you don't particularly want to do or doing those you want to do, but doing the things you don't want to do and giving up things you want. He should always remember to treat his wife with that courtesy and those little attentions which I am sure he has devoted to her while courting her ..."

M.K., Vic says, more than heeded the Governor's advice. His unselfishness towards her was always total and his "little attentions" never ceased.

The list of gifts, headed by the wondrous jewels and the houses at 25 and 26 Lugard Road on the Peak from Sir Robert, covered page after page of the local papers.

M.K.'s parents gave pearls, a diamond, pearl and jade brooch, jade bracelets and diamond bracelets. The Governor's gift was a set of silver fish knives and forks. In addition there was fine blackwood furniture, bolts of silk, a dozen silver bowls, a baker's dozen of silver platters and a score of silver vases. At least three of the guests gave matching silver toothpick holders.

A few pieces remain but Vic was forced to sell most of it during the war.

And in 1931. The "little attentions" never ceased.

NOTABLE HONGKONG WEDDING.

LO—HO TUNG.

A wedding in which much interest was evinced by both the foreign and Chinese communities was celebrated yesterday, the contracting parties being Mr M. K. Lo, a well known local Chinese solicitor, and Victoria Ho Tung, daughter of Sir Robert Ho Tung

The marriage took a civil form and the celebrations began in the forenoon when Sir Robert accompanied his daughter to the Registry Office, where the usual form of marriage was gone through.

The bride was charmingly attired in a dress of white charmeuse, and white Georgette crepe trimmed with rich lace and chiffon with a train of the same material. Her veil of white silk net with orange blossoms was arranged in French style and she carried a bouquet of white roses and orange blossoms. The bride was attended by two bridesmaids, Jean and Grace Ho Tung, with Irene Ho Tung as Maid of Honour. The maids wore pretty frocks of pleated pink Georgette crepe, with ivory lace trimmings and hats to match. Little Florence Ho Tung, the bride's youngest sister, wore a beautiful French linen dress with trimmings of real rich Valenciennes lace. The bridesmaids carried baskets of pink sweet peas. The bride's mother was attired in parne satin with silver trimmings and Marie Georgette crepe.

After the register had been signed the bridal party proceeded to Nettlewood, 55, Robinson Road, the residence of the bridegroom's father, where a reception was held for the Chinese community, many prominent residents attending to offer congratulations to the young couple.

The reception in the afternoon at Idlewild, the residence of Sir Robert Ho Tung was a splendid and unique function: The bride and bridegroom stood beneath a bell of flowers to receive the good wishes of a host of friends, who also had an opportunity of seeing and admiring the number of beautiful presents which were displayed in one of the side rooms. The building was decorated with coloured matting figures, while the Band of the 25th. Middlesex Regiment rendered an interesting musical programme. His Excellency the Governor, with Miss May and Mr P. P. J. Wodehouse A D C. arrived shortly after four o'clock and were received by Sir Robert and Lady Ho Tung. They then proceeded to the room, where most of the guests, including practically all the well known members of the European community, had gathered, and after congratulations had been tendered His Excellency proposed the toast of the bride and bridegroom. He said: It is my privilege this afternoon to ask you to drink to the health of the bride and bridegroom. I am very pleased and proud to do this service for my old friend Sir Robert Ho Tung. He and I have worked a good deal together and he has rendered eminent services to the Government of this Colony. (Hear hear). There is ample evidence of the appreciation in England of the good work he has done by the honour he has received in being created a Knight Bachelor. Apart from personal reasons there is another that gives me pleasure to render him this service and that is the fact that I am also a Knight. If Sir Robert and I cou'd be transported back to the middle ages, clad in armour, and riding on our fiery chargers, I should rush to his assistance to help him against any enemy and I am sure he would do the like by me.

Then there is Lady Ho Tung with whom I have had long acquaintance and friendship, and then there is the bride. You have only to look at her to envy the bridegroom. I have seen her grow up here in our midst. I am proud of her as a product of Hongkong. She is not only good to look upon but she is well accomplished. If any of you wish to test her fluency in the English and French languages you are quite at liberty to do so. I am informed also that she has a pretty taste in music and is considerably accomplished in that art.

Then there is the bridegroom He has been educated in England where he distinguished himself considerably in the field of sport and recreation and after being articled to a well known firm of solicitors he carried off the solicitors' blue riband, the Clement's Inn prize. (Hear, hear). We are all therefore to be proud to have him here in our midst and now that he has won so fair a bride it should help and animate him to further great successes in his profession. If as an old man and a father I might give him a little advice, I would remind him that to-day he has taken the most important step that a man can take in his life. He is now responsible for the happiness of a girl he has taken from loving parents and loving brothers and sisters. It is easy to make a woman happy if you remember two little points. The first is to treat her always with real unselfishness and to remember that unselfishness means not the giving up of things you don't particularly want to do or doing those you want to do, but doing the things you don't want to do and giving up things you want. He should always remember to treat his wife with that courtesy and those little attentions which I am sure he has devoted to her while courting her. Now I will wish them in Chinese fashion "Happiness, long life, health and prosperity" and I should not be a loyal subject of the King if I did not add that old fashioned wish for "A hundred sons and a thousand grandsons."

Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you the health of the bridegroom with three cheers.

The toast was heartily drunk the cheers concluding with a "Peak tiger" and a "British Lion."

Mr Lo in responding said:—Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen. On behalf of the bride and myself, I thank Your Excellency sincerely for the unique honour you have done us in attending this reception, and in proposing the toast to which you, Ladies and Gentlemen, have just so kindly responded.

My heart is too full and I am too happy to say much, but I desire to thank you all for the expression of your good wishes, and I can assure you that you will occupy a prominent place in the unfading picture which I shall cherish as long as I live of this the happiest and proudest day of my life. Again and again on behalf of the bride and myself I thank you.

Sir Robert Ho Tung said: Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen. In returning thanks to our guests, I desire in the first place to express, on behalf of my family and myself, our high sense of the great honour which our Governor has done us by participation in this function and proposing the toast of the day.

Speaking for myself, I am obliged to His Excellency for his kind remarks in reference to me. It has been a privilege and an honour for me to have rendered some little service to the land of my birth.

This is probably the first occasion on which His Excellency has attended the ceremony of a Chinese wedding. This manifestation of his good will is highly appreciated not only by myself and my family, but also by my son-in-law and his parents. To our other guests we are no less grateful for their presence and good wishes, and for the pleasure which their distinguished and genial company has afforded us.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, in the name of my family and myself, I thank you heartily.

A number of telegrams of congratulation were received, including those from Mr Lew Yuk-lin (Macao), Mr Liang Shih-yi (Peking) and Mrs Tisdall (Shanghai), mother of Mr Tisdall, Manager of the Russo-Asiatic Bank in Haiphong.

Mr and Mrs Lo will spend their honeymoon in Canton. The bride's going away dress was a costume of white serge.

The list of presents follows:—

From the Bride's Parents to the Bride, pearl necklace with diamond pendants and clasp; pair diamond ear-rings and drops; diamond bracelet; pearl bracelet; and emerald, ruby, saphire, and gold diamond rings.

From the Bridegroom's Parents to the Bride, pearl necklace; diamond and pearl jade brooch; pair jade bracelets, and diamond bracelets.

H. E. The Governor, set silver fish knives and forks.

His Honour Sir William and Lady Rees Davies, watch in leather case.

Dr. and Mrs. G. E. Aubrey, set silver dessert knives.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Arnold, pair silver bowls.

Mr. and Mrs. A. V. Apcar, silver butter dish and knife.

Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Azevedo, pair silver vases.

Mr. and Mrs. Leo. d'Almada e Castro, silver and glass powder box.

Mr. C. B. Buyers, silver card tray.

Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Bird, pair ink bottles and calendar stand.

Lieut. J. A. Burn, silver purse.

Mr. W. S. C. Brown, silver castor stand.

Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Braga, silver inkstand.

Mr. and Mrs. S. Bisney, silver purse and gold coin.

Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Barlow, silver trinket box.

Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Beswick, silver travelling clock.

Messrs. D. J. M. Bernard, R. H. Austin, A. B. Stewart, A. W. Eastman and S. E. Grimstone, silver butter dish and knife.

Mr. and Mrs. F. Douglas Bain, silver flower stand.

Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Best, set coffee spoons.

Mr. and Mrs. B. Basto, pair silver vases.

Mr. and Mrs. F. B. L. Bowley, gold and pearl bracelet.

Mr. K. Brayshay, silver vase.

The Hon. Mr. and Mrs. W. Chatham, silver flower vase.

Capt. and Mrs. P. R. Gay Cuming, ivory trinket box and table cloth.

Sir Paul and Lady Chater, silver card tray.

Mr. and Mrs. C. Champkin, silver

Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Carroll, pair silver dessert dishes.

Lieut.-Col. and Mrs. Chapman, silver dessert dish.

Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Cartwright, silver card box.

Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Carroll, pair silver vases.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Dunbar, silver butter knife and silver jam spoon.

Mr. and Mrs. T. K. Dealy, oil painting.

Mr. and Mrs. K. H. Digby, set silver menu stands.

Mr. and Mrs. H. B. L. Dowbiggin, set inkstands.

Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Dodwell, pair porcelain vases.

Misses Delminda and Anizia, set silver tea spoons.

Dr. and Mrs. H. C. Earle, liqueur set.

Sir Charles Eloit, volume of rare Japanese engravings.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Elson, silver sweet dish.

Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Franklin, pair brass water jugs.

Dr. and Mrs. Charles Forsyth, silver trinket box.

Miss A. Fairall, embroidered handkerchief.

Miss May Fincher, Miss Albertina Prata, Miss Lolita de Sousa, Miss Maria Kacher, Miss Lusie Tso, Miss Maggie Brockett, Miss Enid Cornell, Miss Esmee Cornell and Miss Victoria Manning, silver flower stand.

Mr. and Mrs. A. G. M. Fletcher, pair silver pepper boxes.

Madame M. Flint, satin purse.

Mr. C. S. Gubbay, pair dessert dishes.

Dr. G. H. Thomas and Miss Nora Gourdin, set silver salt-cellars.

Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Gedge, cut-glass silver mounted claret jug.

Miss. L. Gittens, pair cut-glass vases.

Mrs. E. Golding, embroidered table cloth.

Miss M. E. Goggin, toilet set.

The Hon. Mr. and Mrs. E. R. Hallifax, set silver sweet dishes.

Dr. and Mrs. G. M. Harston, silver coffee set.

Mr. and Mrs. S. Hamer, set silver tea spoons.

Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Hinton, cut-glass inkstand.

Mr. and Mrs. H. Humphreys, silver bowl.

Miss L. E. Heang, silver tea strainer.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Howard, silver butter dish and knife.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hancock, pair silver vases.

Mr. F. M. H. Holman, silver vase.

Mr. and Mrs. S. E. Ismail, silver pin cushion.

Mr. S. A. Joseph and Mr. J. E. Joseph, silver inlaid blackwood tea tray.

Dr. and Mrs. Jordan, silver sugar basket.

Sir Ellis Kadoorie, silver box.

Miss Katie Archee, silver trinket box.

Mr. W. Kay, set silver flower stands.

Miss M. Kew, pair toothpick holders.

Mr. and Mrs. T. H. King, silver inkstand.

Dr. and Mrs. Koch, silver mounted bottle.

Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Lowe, pair silver dessert dishes.

Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Looker, silver card tray.

The Hon. Mr. David Landale, gold wrist watch.

Miss Hellen Lillie and Miss Aileen Lillie, silver sweet tray.

Miss Aileen Lillie, silver sweet tray.

Mr. and Mrs. Geo. P. Lammert, teapoy.

Dr. and Mrs. A. Lello, pair Japanese vases.

Mr. L. N. Leefe, silver card tray.

Mr. and Mrs. A. O. Lang, pair silver dessert dishes.

Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Lammert, pair silver jugs and spoons.

Major and Mrs. D. Macdonald, ivory curio.

Mr. and Mrs. F. Maitland, silver photo frame.

Mr. G. C. Moxon, silver salt cellar and mustard pepper pots.

Dr. and Mrs. Marriot, set silver coffee spoons.

Miss Maclean, silver nut crackers.

Miss Mackenzie, silver button hook.

The Mother Superior St. Paul's Institution, embroidered cushion.

The Mother Superior Italian Convent, embroidered gown.

Mr. and Mrs. K. S. Morrison, set silver forks.

Mr. and Madame Moussion, pair silver vases.

Mrs. C. More, embroidered table cloth.

Mr. R. F. Mattingly, pair silver forks.

Mr. and Mrs. G. E. Marley, Porcelain jug.

Mr. J. H. Mody, silver bowl.

Miss Ruby Mow Fung and Miss L. Price, pair silver salt-cellars.

Mrs. I. P. Madar, pair silver tooth-pick holders.

Miss McKenzie, pair silver napkin rings.

Dr. and Mrs. T. Majima, pair porcelain vases.

Mr. and Mrs. J. H. N. Mody, stove and teapot.

Mrs. W. J. Noodt, velvet cushion.

Mr. and Mrs. G. Piercy, table cloth.

Mr. J. Pestonjee, pair silver tooth-pick holders.

Mr. P. C. Potts, silver dessert tray.

Mr. and Mrs. E. Ralphs, porcelain vase.

Mr. and Mrs. [illegible]

Mr. K. Raymond, silver card case.

Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Redmond, pair silver salt cellars.

Capt. W. F. Richardson, table centre.

Mr. E. H. Ray, silver mirror.

The Hon. Mr. Claud Severn, pair silver vases.

Mr. and Mrs. F. P. de V. Soares, antique embroidered frame.

Mr. and Mrs. F. D. Stapleton, pair silver dishes.

Dr. and Mrs. Stedman, electric lamp stands.

Miss Skipton, silver trinket box.

Mr. Rachel Solomon, silver umbrella handle.

Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Seth, Japanese screen.

Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Smith, cut-glass silver mounted liqueur stand.

Professor and Mrs. Middleton Smith, water colour.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Sutherland, claret jug.

Mr. Robert Shewan, set fish knives and forks, and overmantel clock.

Miss A. Shin, Pair ivory photo frames.

Consul and Mrs. E. V. M. R. de Sousa, silver-mounted tray.

Mr. and Mrs. N. J. Stabb, travelling clock.

Hon. Mr. and Mrs. E. Shellim, silver tray.

Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Surman, oil painting.

Mr. Percy Smith, silver fern pot.

Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Taggart, silver bowl.

Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Tutcher, crochet doylies and teapot holder.

Mr T. Tester, pair silver vases.

Mr. and Mrs. E. D. C. Wolfe, silver knife and fork.

Mr. J. R. Wood, pair silver dishes.

Miss Woodcock and Mr. G. A. Woodcock, silver vases.

Professor and Mrs. Arthur Warren, silver pepper boxes.

Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Wallace, cut glass bottle.

Mr. J. D. Wright, tortoise shell fan.

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Weill, set cut-glass cups with silver lids.

Mr. J. O. Anderson and Brothers travelling clock.

Messrs. Hugh, Earnest and Charles Anderson, gold bracelet.

Members of Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, silver toilet box and silver bowl.

Mr. Chan Pak Fi, silver photo frame.

Mr. Chan Wai Nam and Son piece satin.

Mr. Chuk Chi Cheung and Brother, pair embroidered pillows and pair ivory fans.

Mr. Chan Lai Ting, set porcelain wares.

Madame Chan, gold bracelet with watch.

It was the wedding of the year and both the South China Morning Post and The China Mail devoted page after page after page to the celebration and the gift list.

At Home With The Lo Family

Before the war, our house was a warm, happy place always filled with various members of the family. George Ho came to stay with Vic and M.K. when he was about 10 years old and remembers being rather shocked by their strange meals.

"In the Lo household, one ate heavy meals for breakfast and eggs for dinner," he said.

My parents rarely quarreled, mostly because M.K. valued peace more than getting his way. Vic, who could be something of a battle-axe, learned early that the best way to stop M.K.'s grumbling was to cry. As Vera would say, M.K. was a "softie."

M.K. loved beefsteak which our cook invariably overdid. M.K., rather than risk a scene by complaining of tough meat, would pretend that his knife was dull. If a dish had a bad taste, he would pronounce it "different." After awhile, Vic caught on to that one and would cry and M.K. would force himself to finish it anyway.

Vic was well aware of the bully side of her character. "If you have a bossy side," she often said to me, "you got it from me."

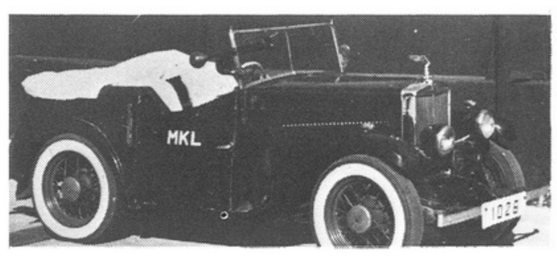
There was always somthing crazy going on at our house! Here's Vic clipping Aunt Grace's toenails in March 1934. Wilbur, Phoebe, Vera and Rita gave the event their full attention.

M.K. loved to drive and as soon as he could afford it, he bought his first car, a Model T Ford. It was an event that spawned one of Vic's favourite family tales.

Feeling quite pleased with himself, M.K. took Vic for a drive out toward Aberdeen. Suddenly there was a fantastic bang. A brick heaved from the side of the road had hit the spanking new car leaving a big, ugly dent.

About 10 men from a nearby factory burst out laughing as the normally calm M.K. jumped out of the car — livid — and demanded that the culprit come forward. When the miscreant stepped forward more from the shock of M.K.'s anger than arrogance, M.K. socked him, walked back to the car and drove off.

M.K. loved to drive. Here he is in the early 1930's with an early family car. Knowing M.K.'s penchant, John Keswick gave him this monogrammed model in 1956.



M.K. with Gwen, his first child.

Little Gwendolin was born 10 months after the wedding, on 24th February 1919. Gwen was born with what seemed to be an attack of jaundice but what was actually a tetanic infection.

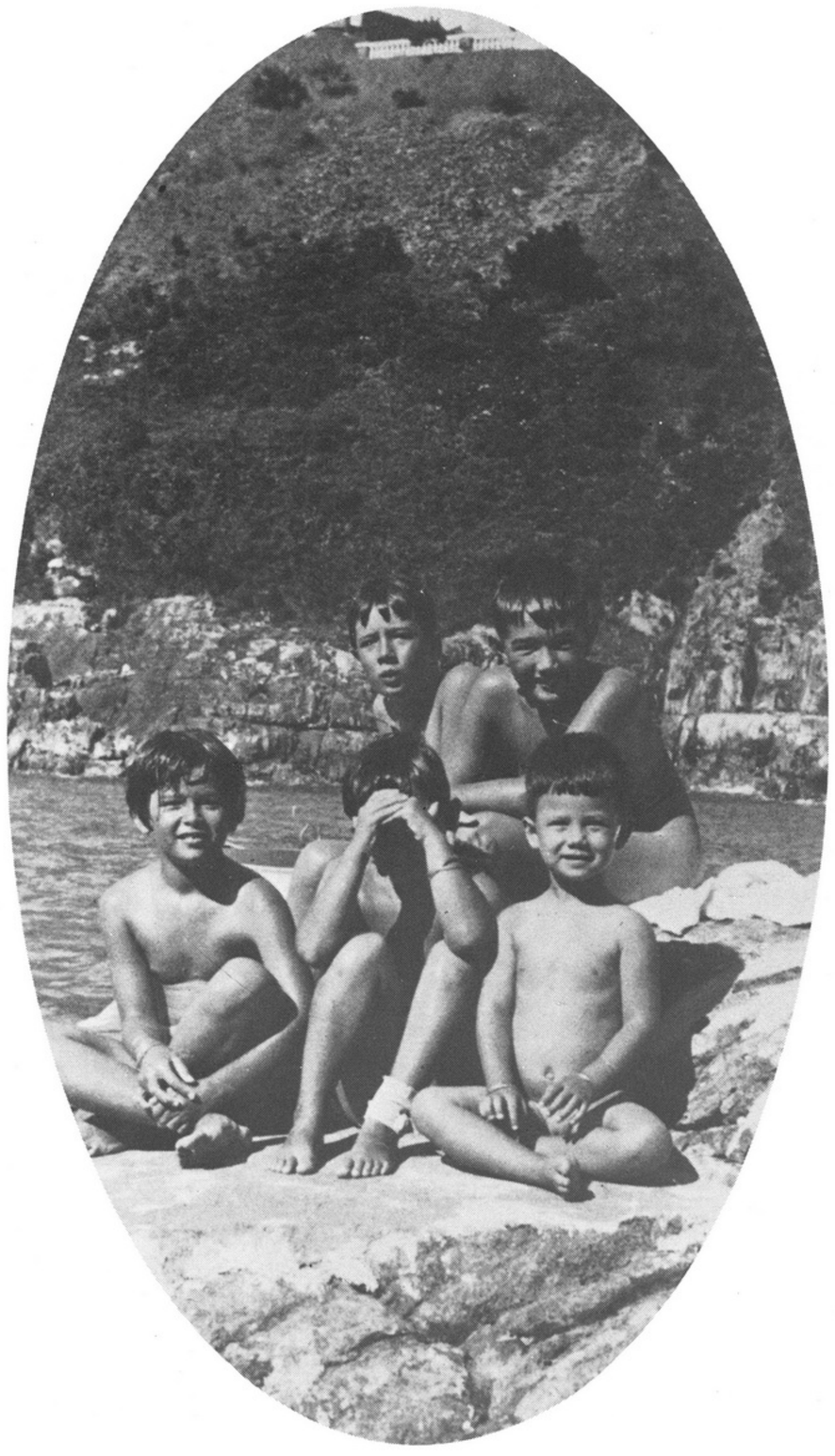
Vic was so worried about her first born that she, too, fell ill with a mixture of the same tetanic infection and anxiety. For months she was an invalid, semi-conscious, running a high fever and nearly paralyzed. Lady Clara took Vic to China where she eventually recuperated. But Gwen died on 5th August 1924.

Wilbur (Tak Kuen) was born 1st November 1922 followed by Phoebe Gladys on 14th December 1924, Vera Joyce also coincidentally on 14th December 1927 and Rita on 20th January 1930.

I was born 23rd January 1935, the Year of the Dog. M.K. kept a book of English names but after a long search decided he could find none appropriate. And so I remain Tak Shing or T.S..

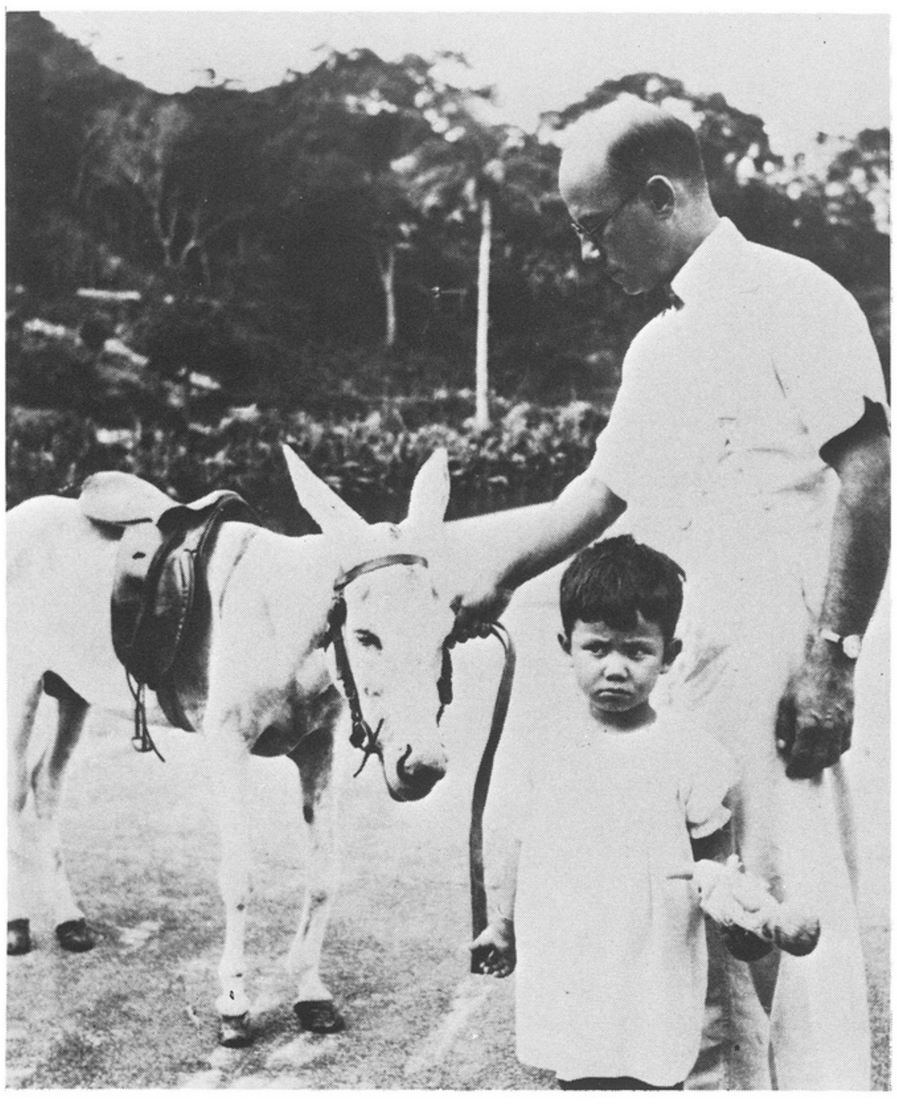
When I was less than two years old, Wilbur developed what appears now to have been polio and died on 9th November 1936. Both M.K. and Vic were devastated.

Little Gwen circa 1919.



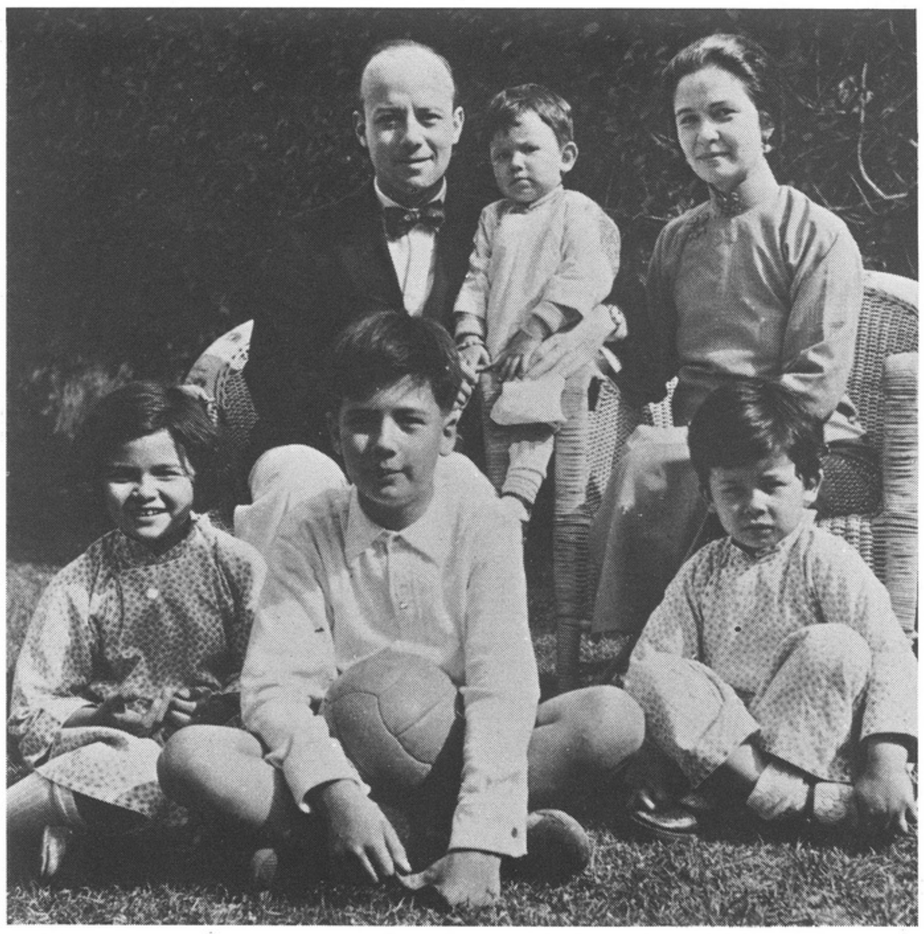
Phoebe, Vera and Rita go skinny-dipping at Tytam with Wilbur and Cousin Kenneth Lo in August 1933.

By 1934, there were enough cousins in our extended family to form the Tytam Football Team.
Front row: Eric Ho (Doris Lo's son) Rita and Tommy Lo.
Middle row: Cecilia Ho, Algy Ho (who died in World War II fighting as a volunteer) and Pamela Ho.
Back row: Phoebe, Wilbur, Kenneth Lo and Vera.



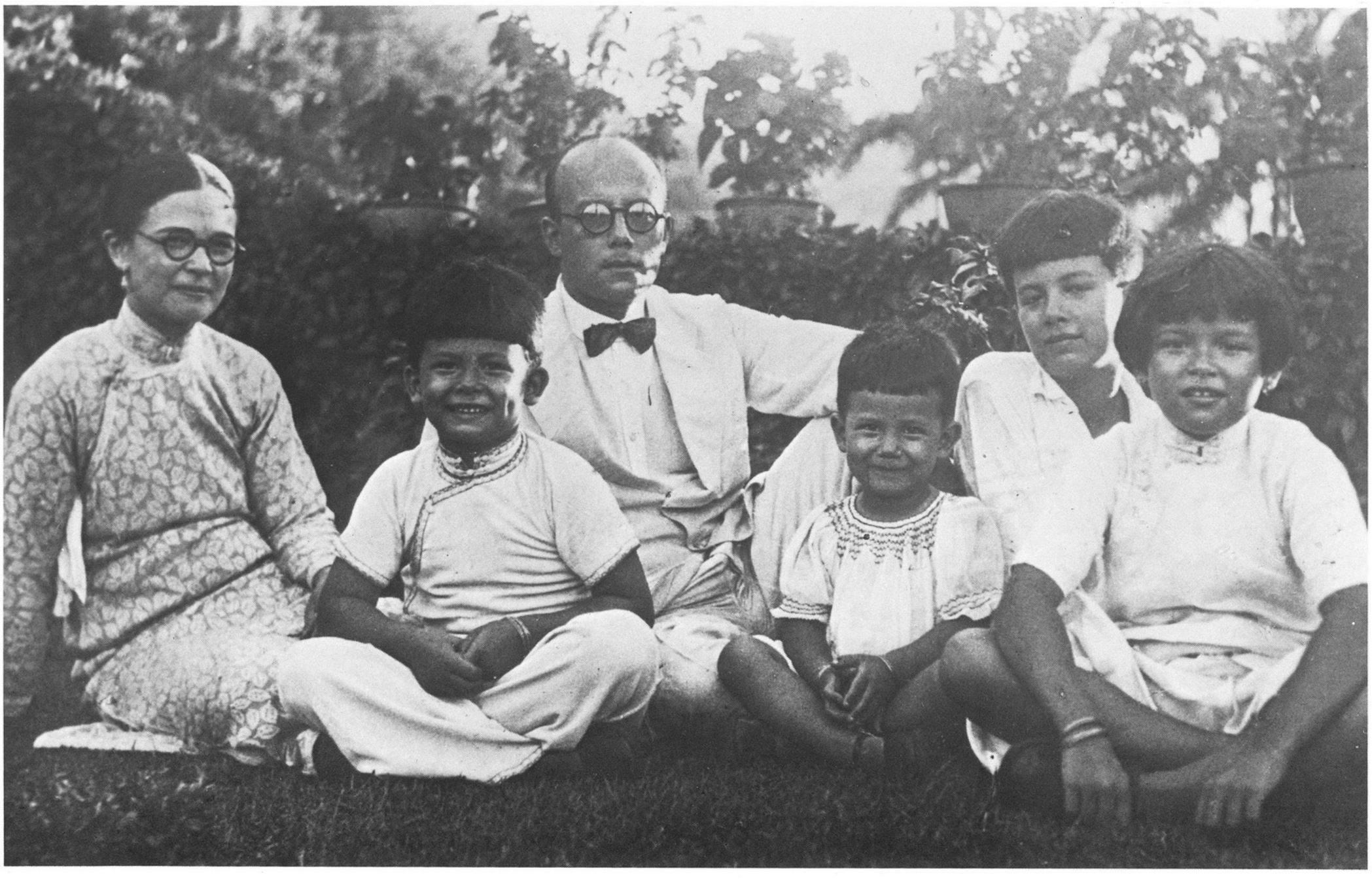
M.K. tries to coach Rita onto one of Lady Clara's donkeys in 1934.

The Lo Family Album

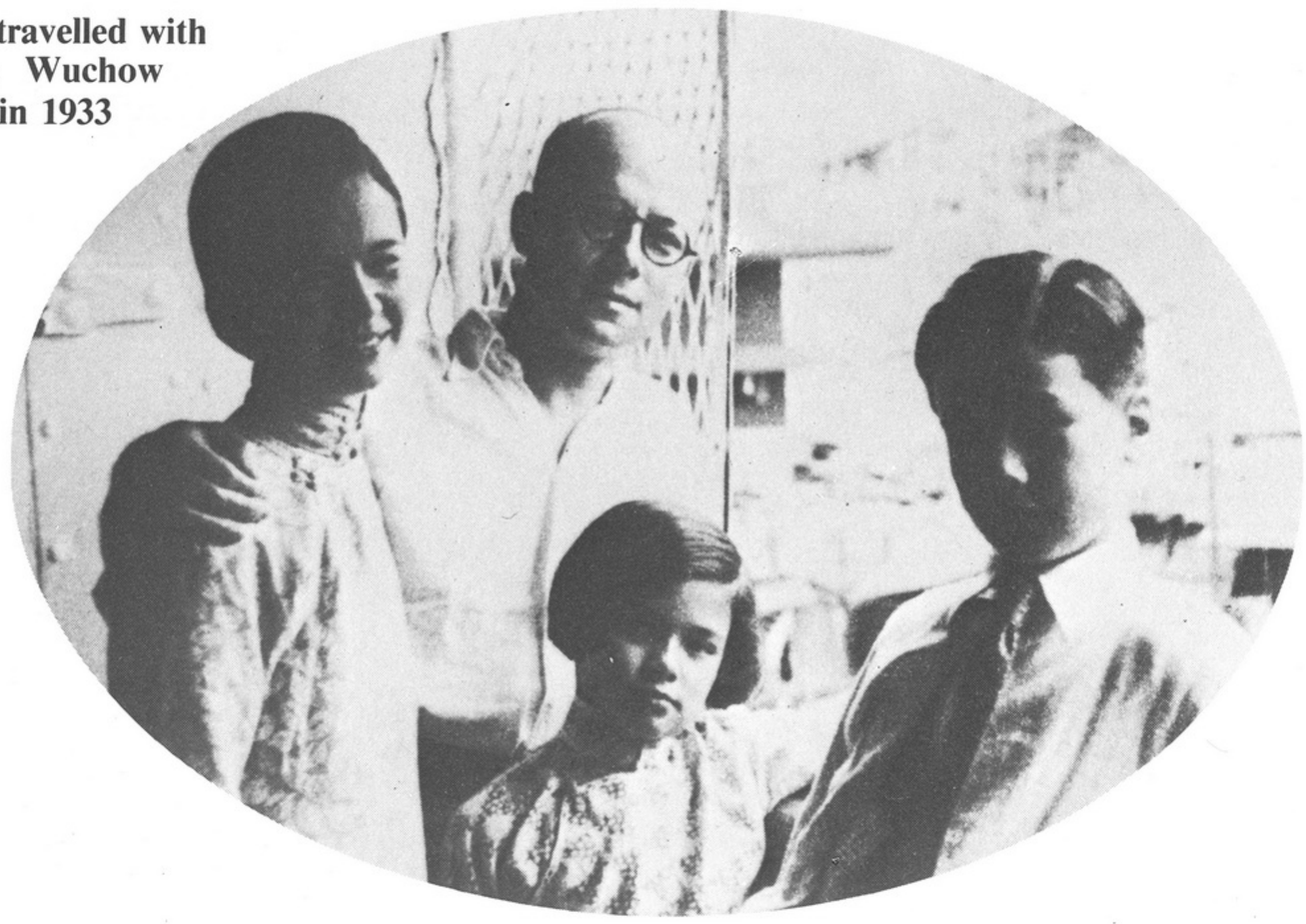


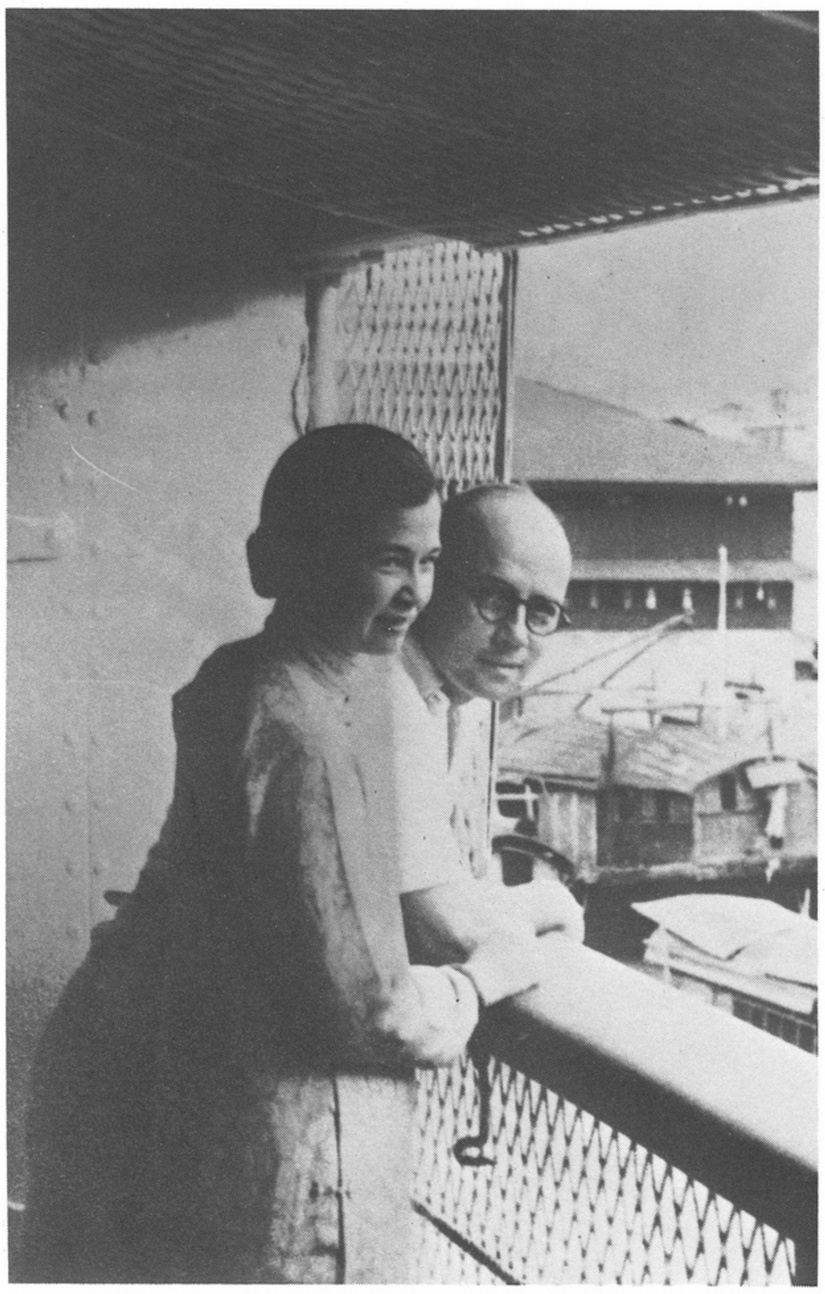
Everyone was smiling in April 1932 — except Vera, who stubbed her toe playing football, and Rita, who seemed most annoyed despite occupying the place of honour.

M.K.'s 40th birthday party in July 1933 was a family affair. Here are Vic, Vera, M.K., Rita, Wilbur and Phoebe.



Phoebe and Wilbur travelled with Vic and M.K. to Wuchow at Eastertime in 1933





For my parents, the voyage was a time of calm happiness.

August 1936: Phoebe and Rita were in charge of keeping me still for family snapshots. They had it down to a science — Phoebe pinned me with her knees while Rita ''held'' my hand.

M.K. wore spats in 1929 for this formal portrait of the directors of the Tung Wah Hospital Group, one of many charitable organizations he served with both time and funds.

A Political Tradition

There is a political tradition within the Lo family which first overshadowed and then completely overcame the pursuit of wealth. M.K. became involved in the politics of Hong Kong because of his keen sense of justice. There were many battles to be won in the colonial Hong Kong of those days — a Hong Kong which lay under a heavy cloud of racism.

When he returned from England and established Lo & Lo, the racism astounded him for he had encountered little evidence of it in England where he was accepted for what he was: a man with a first class brain and first class qualifications.

But Hong Kong, run for the most part by colonial blimps, was a different story.

As a lawyer, he was once not allowed to see his client in a police station. He was enraged and took the matter all the way through all local channels and finally to the Colonial Office in the U.K.. Eventually he got a very grudging apology from the then Colonial Secretary saying that he agreed that a civil servant should be civil.

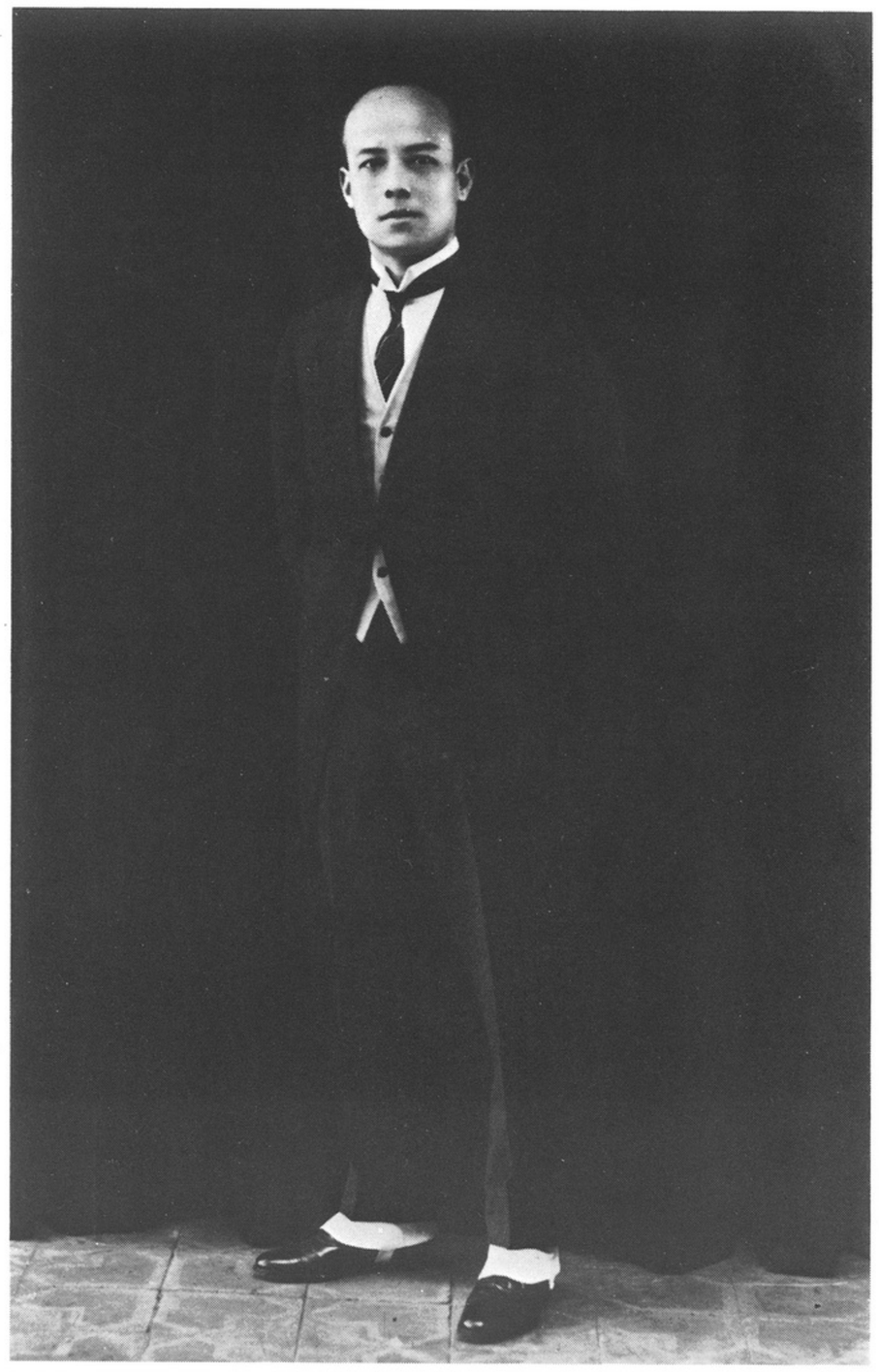
More importantly, M.K. was never stopped again from seeing his clients in police stations.

Another well known brush with the establishment came when he objected to the Hong Kong Jockey Club rule at that time which distinguished Europeans from Chinese.

Although the Shanghai Jockey Club admitted Chinese — and welcomed Chinese jockeys — the Hong Kong Jockey Club did not. "It would upset jockeys if they should have to ride side by side with Chinese jockeys," was the usual explanation. M.K.'s open letter to the stewards eventually triumphed over that childishness.

M.K. at the races in 1936 — he won the Jockey Club battle.

M.K.'s portrait when he was elected Chairman of Directors of the Tung Wah Hospital Group 1929-1930.



M.K. circa 1932. The people of Hong Kong trusted him.

Taking a break "at sea" to ponder the problems of Hong Kong.

M.K. circa 1933.

M.K. at his desk in 1933

M.K. also spoke out against the censoring of the Hong Kong Chinese press and urged the abolition of the post of Chief Censor, which again he succeeded in doing.

He was hardly a firebrand but he could be bad tempered when confronted by things done badly. Many things were badly done in the British administration — and this stimulated his sense of outrage.

M.K. entered public life at a time of change — when the colony was feeling the first stirrings of democracy. He was listened to because he spoke with the dignity of a statesman and with the perhaps naive belief that men are unjust out of ignorance alone.

However, Hong Kong's democratic progress was arrested first by the Second World War and the Japanese occupation and later by the rise of communism in China. In between these two events came the reconstruction of Hong Kong out of the rubble of the war.

This monumental task needed the help of dedicated and selfless local people. They had to combine high grade administrative ability, political insight and leadership. Above all, the task needed people with mature judgement of the sensibilities and susceptibilities of both the British and the Chinese governments.

When M.K. decided to help, our family's involvement in the running of Hong Kong began.

M.K. had no sense of power and didn't seem to enjoy the considerable power he had. He served on more than 50 government committees and boards, including the Legislative Council and the Executive Council, because he felt it was his duty to serve.

It was M.K.'s spiritual generosity, his infinite sense of honour and his unblemished reputation as an honest man and a brilliant lawyer that made so many people turn to him for counsel. He gave to all — whether they lived in the Governor's mansion or in a shanty hut.

There was around M.K. an atmosphere of unassailable integrity — he gave one the feeling that the good will always win. One's nicer instincts responded to his presence and the people around him became kinder as a result.

Curiously, the people of Hong Kong responded to M.K.. Curious because Hong Kong people value money success and no member of the Lo family really had that.

**December 29th 1954: The Governor,
Sir Alexander Grantham, does the honours
at Victoria's investiture as a
Member of the British Empire.
After Queen Elizabeth II appointed Victoria an MBE,
M.H. held a party at his home Woodgreen in
honour of the occasion. Everyone made toasts and
I remember M.W. raising his glass to Victoria and saying:
"An MBE to some stands for Must Be Educated.
"To others, it stands for Must Be Economical.
"To Vic, it stands for both."**

M.K. camped as a volunteer in 1920

The War Years

M.K. as a member of the government Legislative Council was, of course, duty-bound to remain in Hong Kong until the surrender to the Japanese — even though he was too old for the "Volunteers."*

After the surrender, he worried that by escaping he might bring Japanese recriminations down upon his extended family. His face was well known and he was fairly certain he would be captured trying to cross the border — endangering all of us.

As one would expect, Vic insisted on remaining at his side.

M.K.'s political stature made him a priority target of the Japanese.

Soon after the occupation of Hong Kong, the Japanese approached M.K. and "asked" him to sit on their "advisory council" — the Hing Ah Kee Kwan. He refused and was arrested and sent to jail.

Vic remembers that day all too well.

"M.K. was dragged off with M.W. and M.H. one day but a few hours later the two brothers were released. They sent one of my nephews up to the house to tell me that M.K. was still in prison.

"I said: 'What? They've come out without their brother?' And I sent them a message: 'If you don't get him out, I'm going to the gendarmes myself.'"

He was released soon afterwards.

Note: "Volunteers." This was largely the Eurasian Community Regiment of Hong Kong. They suffered the heaviest casualties during the Japanese invasion and many were murdered by the Japanese after the surrender. Many were our relatives.

Worried about Vic and about me, he finally agreed to join the council — and then sat on it for three and a half years distinguished only by his total silence — except for one occasion.

"He was determined not to speak," said Vic. "He felt he couldn't do good and therefore it was best not to say anything at all."

However, once towards the end the war the Japanese authorities approached the council for advice on how they could improve their relations with the local Chinese and win their cooperation.

Other members on the council gave their usual detailed advice. M.K. as usual kept quiet.

But that was not to be because by then the short wave had made it clear that the allies were winning and one member thought it wise to make M.K. one of them.

"Ask M.K.," he said.

Every head in the room turned in his direction and for the first time in three years and six months, M.K. was forced to give a view. His answer added a new dimension to the respect and affection the people of Hong Kong already felt for him.

"I think you should recognize that the Chinese are a very modest and civilized people," M.K. drawled, "and consequently object to Japanese soliders relieving themselves in public. It would improve your relationship with the people of Hong Kong if they would be instructed to refrain."

The Japanese took it seriously and the next day appropriate orders were issued to all troops!

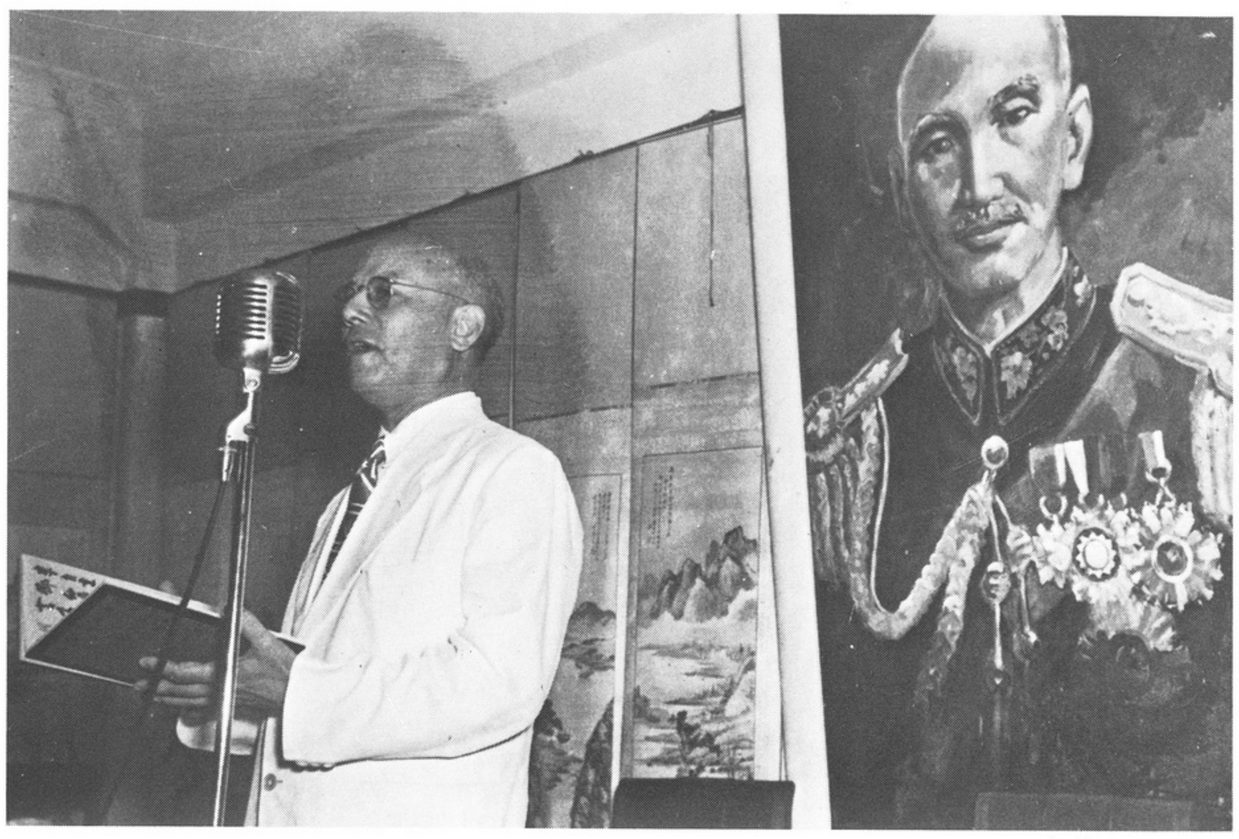
M.K.'s selfless loyalty during the war and his devotion to the task of rebuilding Hong Kong immediately afterwards earned him a knighthood in the King's birthday honours of 1948.

George Ho remembers the day an exultant Victoria called her father with the news that his son-in-law was now Sir Man Kam Lo. "There was disappointment written all over his face when he heard the news," said George. "He couldn't bear that M.K. should have the same honour as he."

Sir Robert accompanied M.K. to the knighthood investiture ceremony on December 30, 1948 where M.K. Lo became Sir Man Kam Lo.

He looked smashing, if a bit self-conscious, in his top hat.
But relaxed when surrounded by three of his proud women: Vic, Vera and Rita.

SIR MAN KAM LO TAKES HIS BOWS 1948



The dinners and receptions in honour of his investiture went on for months. Here he is speaking at an SCAA banquet.

The Chamber of Commerce also honoured him at a cocktail reception.

In 1933, the Lo and Ho clans became even closer as Grace married M.K.'s youngest brother, Lo Man Ho, who everyone called Horace. Horace, also an attorney, practised at Lo & Lo for a few years. After World War II, he served as a Hong Kong magistrate until his death.
Back row: (left to right) M.K., M.H., M.W., Jean, Billy Gittins, Robbie
Middle row: Edith, Kenneth Lo, Eileen, Gertie, Enid, Maggie, Mrs. Ho Wing, Victoria
Front row: Sir Robert, Margaret, K.C. Yeo, Rita, Horace, Grace, Florence, Clara, Betty, Grandfather Lo, Hesta.

Grace and Sir Robert

The Painful Memories

The war and the Japanese were the source of many family tales — less painful as stories today than when they were reality.

When it became obvious that we could expect bad times, Vic and M.K. made a difficult decision. They sent my three sisters — Phoebe, 17, Vera, 15, and 12-year-old Rita — to China.

M.K.'s magistrate brother, Horace, and Vic's sister Grace had decided to flee with their daughter Shirley and my parents decided to entrust my sisters to them.

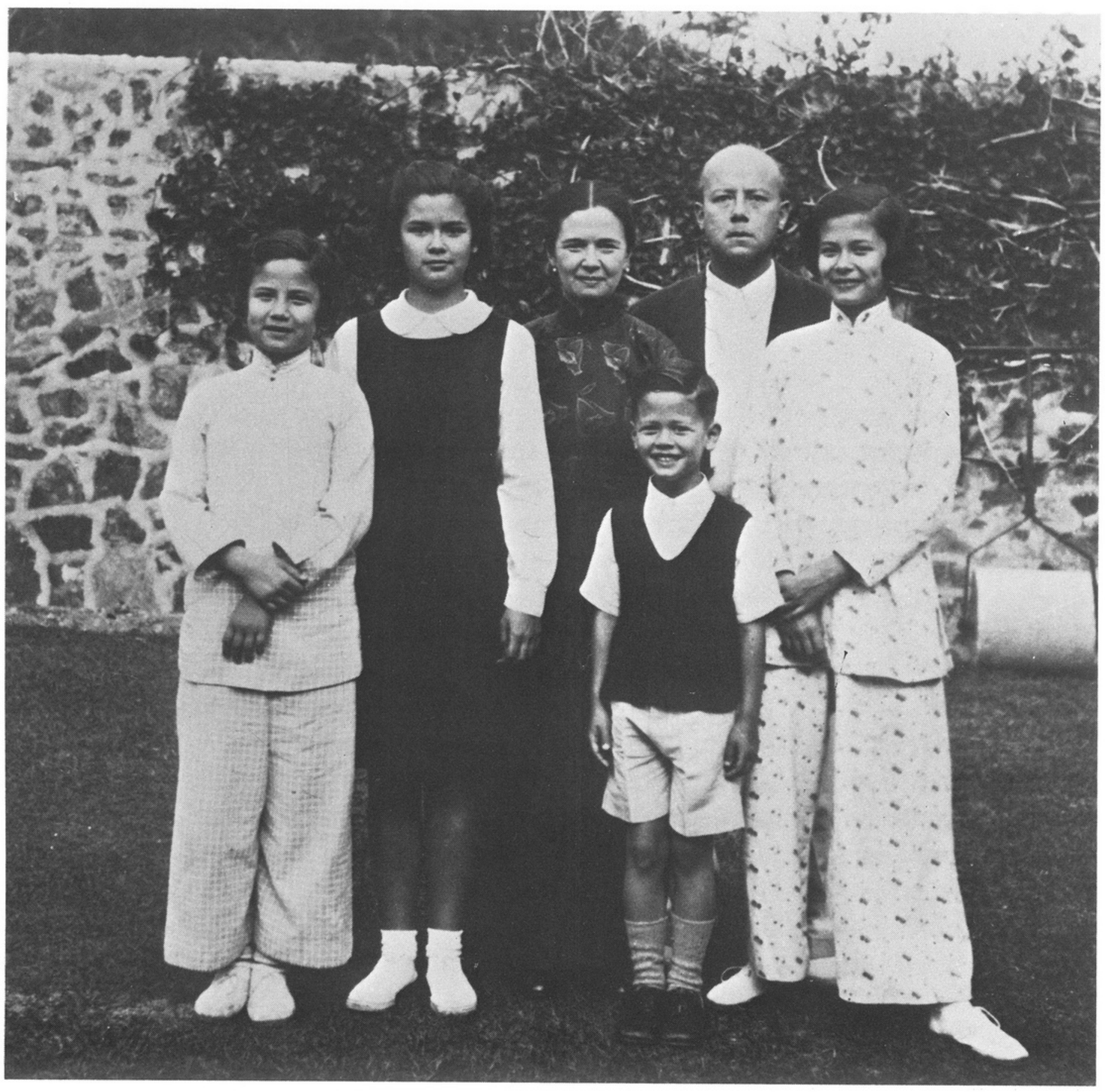
"I felt that if we didn't send them away, they would fall too far behind in their school," Vic said, always a stickler when it came to education. "When I told this to M.K., he said he agreed but that he had no money. But I still had some of my wedding jewelry buried in M.W.'s hillside wall and I went and dug it up.

"M.W. was furious. He accused me of being too changeable and not being able to make up my mind. I said to him: 'I'm not taking anything of yours. Your brother has no money left and we need things to sell.'

"I sold some of it for the best price I could get — it went for a song — and most of the rest I gave to Grace to sell if necessary in the interior."

I was kept at home — mostly, I later learned — at the insistence of my sisters who considered me too small, too troublesome and too mischievous to have tagging along,

I remember the girls having their heads shaved and their breasts bound so they would look like boys during the escape into China. We all walked down the hill to see the girls off. I thought we were having a family outing.



1940: One of our last family pictures before the girls were sent to China.

The girls in Chengtu in 1943. That's Howard Lym, one of Phoebe's admirers, smiling in the back. Our house was filled with joy when couriers brought us news of the girls — or even pictures like this.

On the way, someone ran up to Vic and pulled her earring off right through her ear — she never cried out or said a word and we only learnt about it after we got home. She didn't want to upset anyone more than they already were.

M.K. gave Uncle Horace the money, letters of credit and some of Vic's wedding jewelry, all of which Horace carefully stored in a tiny bag.

The sad, little band boarded a boat for Canton and then a train. At the train station a con man deftly relieved Horace of the tiny bag of valuables.

Their experiences as refugees were ugly and even today Vera refuses to discuss what she calls "my disgusting memories of man's total inhumanity to man."

From the tales of the others, I know that they truly suffered — they nearly starved a number of times, one had a nervous breakdown and they were separated from each other in the crush of panicky refugees.

There was enormous tension in the house when my sisters did not contact home immediately after the war. My parents finally found one in a Chinese hospital and the others elsewhere with the aid of British military intelligence.

Other members of the family suffered as well.

My Aunt Jean Gittins also remained in the colony. After her husband Billy was captured and imprisoned along with other Volunteers attempting to defend the colony, she decided to submit to internment. She marched into Stanley Prison with the British expatriates and remained there throughout the war. Billy was later sent to Japan where he died in a prison camp.

On 19th March 1929, Jean married Billy Gittins, an electrical engineer. The family at first frowned on the match but Billy won Clara's heart by helping her design her gardens. Billy died in a Japanese prison camp during the war.

On December 2, 1941, the family gathered for the Diamond Wedding anniversary and "Joint 80th Grand Birthdays" of Sir Robert and Lady Margaret. Lady Margaret was really three years younger but when a couple reached such years, Chinese custom encourages one partner to upgrade his years so they may celebrate a "joint birthday." The celebration did not end happily. Six days later, the full fury of World War II reached Hong Kong. Uncle Eddie, who had journeyed to Hong Kong from Shanghai for the gathering, was out trying to find ration coupons for the family when the Japanese launched an air attack. A bomb exploded near him — leaving him with more than 100 wounds and eventually costing him his legs.

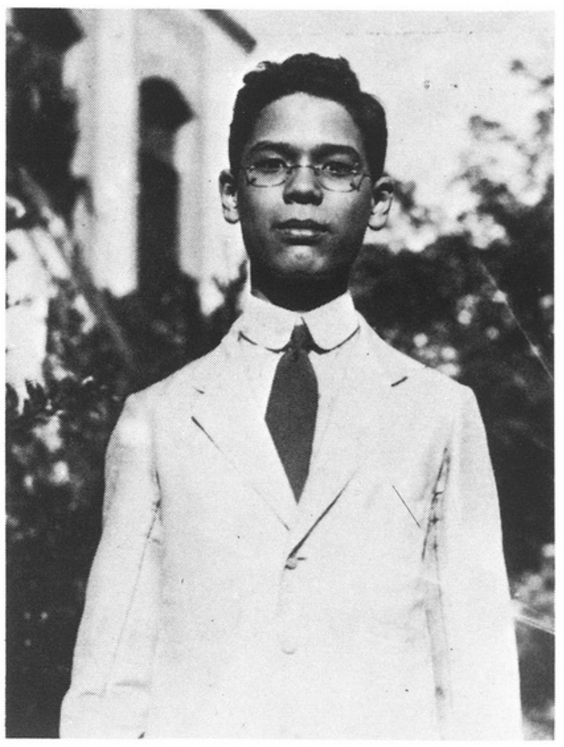
Uncle Eddie, who lived in Shanghai, was visiting Hong Kong with his family when war broke out. During one of the worst bombing raids, he was hit while walking from Central up the Peak to the "Falls." One of his legs was amputated above the ankle and the other leg had to be amputated just below the knee. Years later he died of a heart attack.

K.C. Yeo, a Singaporean who married Aunt Florence and later became the Director of Medical and Health Services, was imprisoned and tortured for months after the Japanese accused him of being implicated in an attempt to smuggle money into Stanley Prison. The money, a veritable fortune, had been found under the bandages of a prisoner returning from a trip to hospital.

Aunt Florence, left alone with my cousins Richard, Daphne and Wendy, suffered terribly but begged Vic and M.K. not to visit her in case they too would be accused. They did what they could to help her quietly.

Uncle Ho Wing, Sir Robert's adopted son and a banking official, also was tortured horribly by the Japanese when he refused to sign banknotes for them.

Edward (Sai Kim) (世儉) Ho Tung circa 1945. After he was hit, Uncle Eddie dragged himself on his hands and knees back up to The Falls to find help.



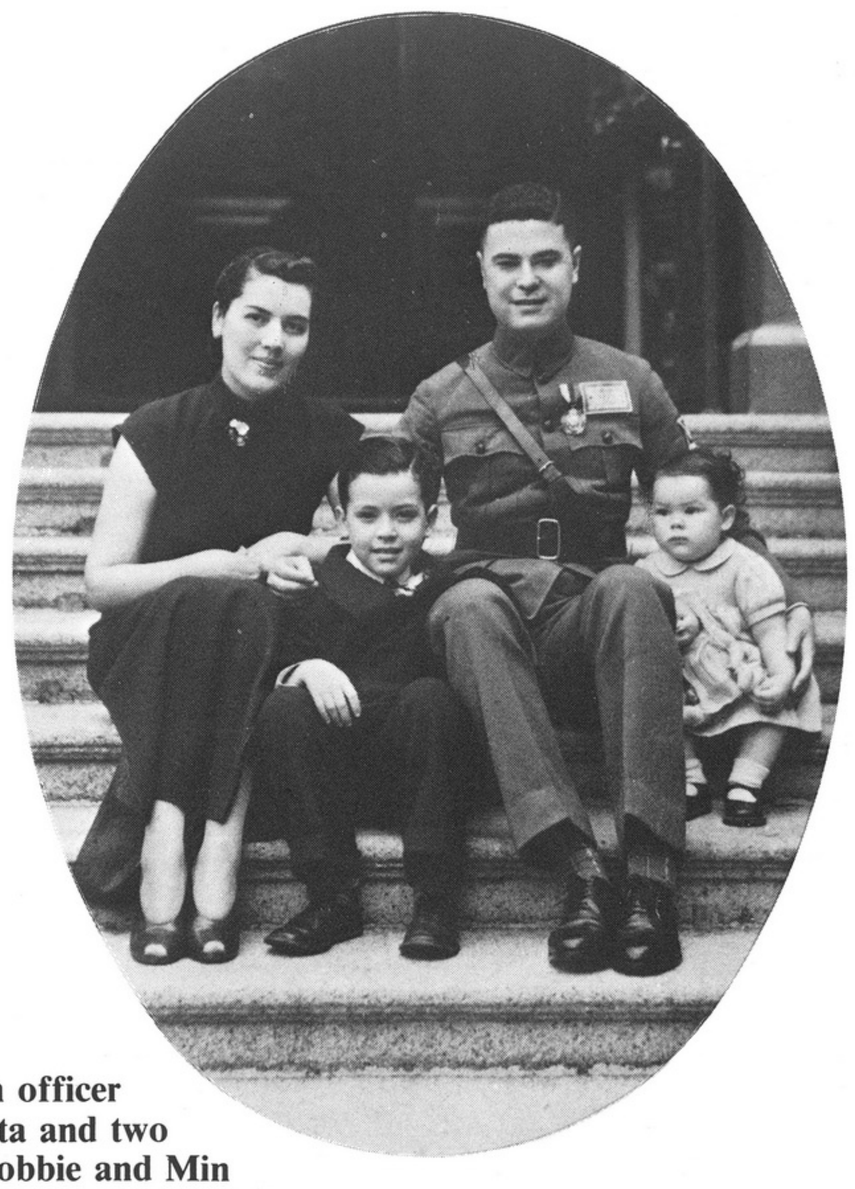
A young and carefree Uncle Eddie

Robbie, M.K. and Wilbur on
December 2nd 1931

Ho Shai Lai was the family warrior

Ready for the hunt: Uncle Robbie with his hounds at Fountainbleau, where he studied military affairs, in 1934.

We all went to the airport to see Uncle Robbie off to the Front in January 1938.



Uncle Robbie as an officer with his wife Hesta and two children, Bobbie and Min (Margaret) in 1940.

No one was really worried about the Japanese in April 1938 . . . but I was prepared! Vic was making her own quiet preparations too.

Shortly after the Japanese takeover, a Japanese platoon came to the house to look it over. They were commandeering many homes, especially those they found attractive. Their excuse was usually that they had found "contraband" or "arms"* hidden in the house.

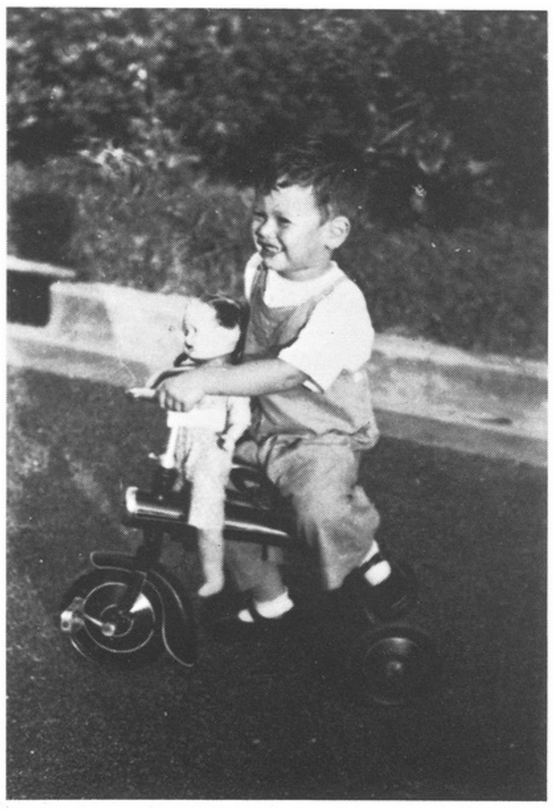
The troops spread out through our house and garden — pulling out every drawer and searching every nook and cranny. Their surly attitude changed suddenly when they saw our ancestor worship tablet. A bomb had hit the house just over the tablet leaving a big hole in the ceiling just above it. But the bomb hadn't exploded!

They stood in front of the tablet and bowed and bowed. Afterwards they left us relatively in peace.

Note: "Contraband": this included rice of any quantity. "Arms": this included radios.

February 1938: In the garden at Nettlewood with M.K.

July 1937: Taking my doll for a ride.



For me the war was something of a lark — played for the most part in the back garden of our Midlevels home Nettlewood and in the tunnel that ran into the mountainside from M.W.'s house with air vents in the garden of M.H.'s home Woodgreen.

During the weeks of the Japanese bombing of Hong Kong, we hid in the tunnel. There were about 60 children in that tunnel and later we were all sworn to silence — if the Japanese had found out about our hiding place, they would have commandeered the houses.

I was only six years old at the time of the bombing but I remember my amah saying: "Poor little thing. Only eight and already running from bombs."

I would have been eight had she calculated my age in the traditional Chinese fashion — whereby a baby is one year old at birth and two at the first New Year day. Since I was born on the 19th day of the Twelfth Moon (the lunar calendar equivalent of 23 January), I reached the age of "two" when I was only three weeks old.

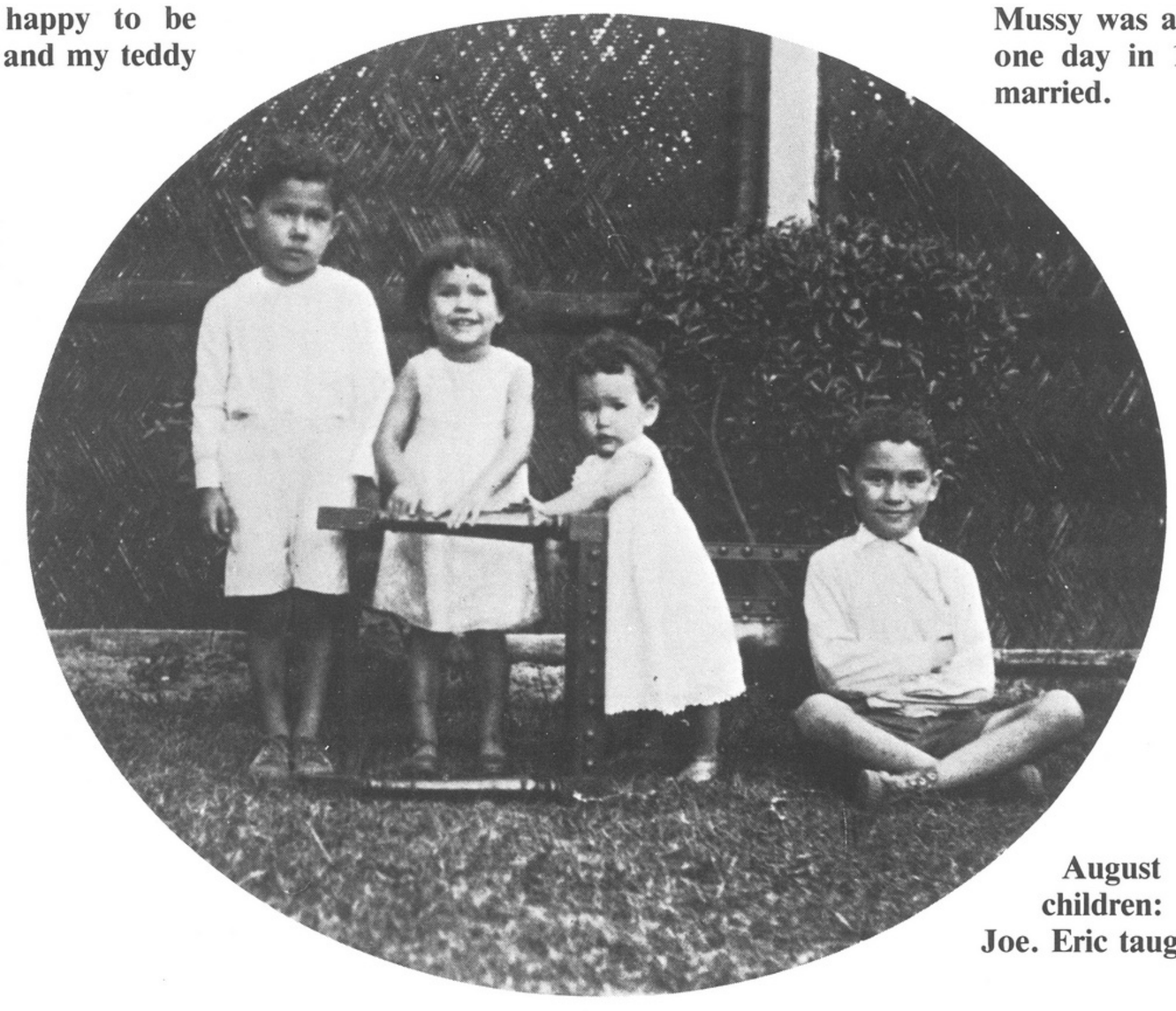
One vivid memory is of a trip with Victoria to Caine Road to visit my godmother. Along the way, I saw a beautiful doll lying beside the road and ran and picked if up. It was already in my arms before I realized it was a well dressed and dead baby.

Playing At The Falls

Shirley Lo was one of my favourite playmates when I was small. We often shared a swing . . .

and she was always happy to be photographed with me and my teddy bear. October 1938.

Mussy was another favourite — and one day in 1940 we decided to get married.



August 1934. Uncle Eddie's children: Eric, Toni, Mary and Joe. Eric taught me judo.

With a family the size of ours, there were myriad excuses for reunions — like this one in the garden of Idlewild to celebrate Irene's birthday in October 1937. Shirley thought the light post was the best place to observe the festivities but, for me, no perch in the world was higher or grander than M.K.'s shoulder.

Victoria: The Indomitable

Vic was a fearsome presence to all of us — but she would have died for her children or for anyone else she considered a victim of injustice. Her only admission of weakness were the migraines she suffered. When one struck, we had to tiptoe around the house and close all the shutters — the slightest light or noise would make her scream.

The front gate of Nettlewood was only 40 yards from the steep path running alongside our garden and leading to Conduit Road — a path used by many Chinese women seeking firewood. A favourite game of the Japanese occupation troops was to take their trained Alsatian dogs and wait beside our garden to ambush these women as they returned with their loads of wood.

One day Vic and I were in the garden when the Japanese sprang one of their traps. Vic was infuriated, ran out and shooed the dogs away. Then, she gathered the women around her and took them into the house to bandage them.

"I'm a registered nurse, you know," she always said though no one knows where she got any such training.

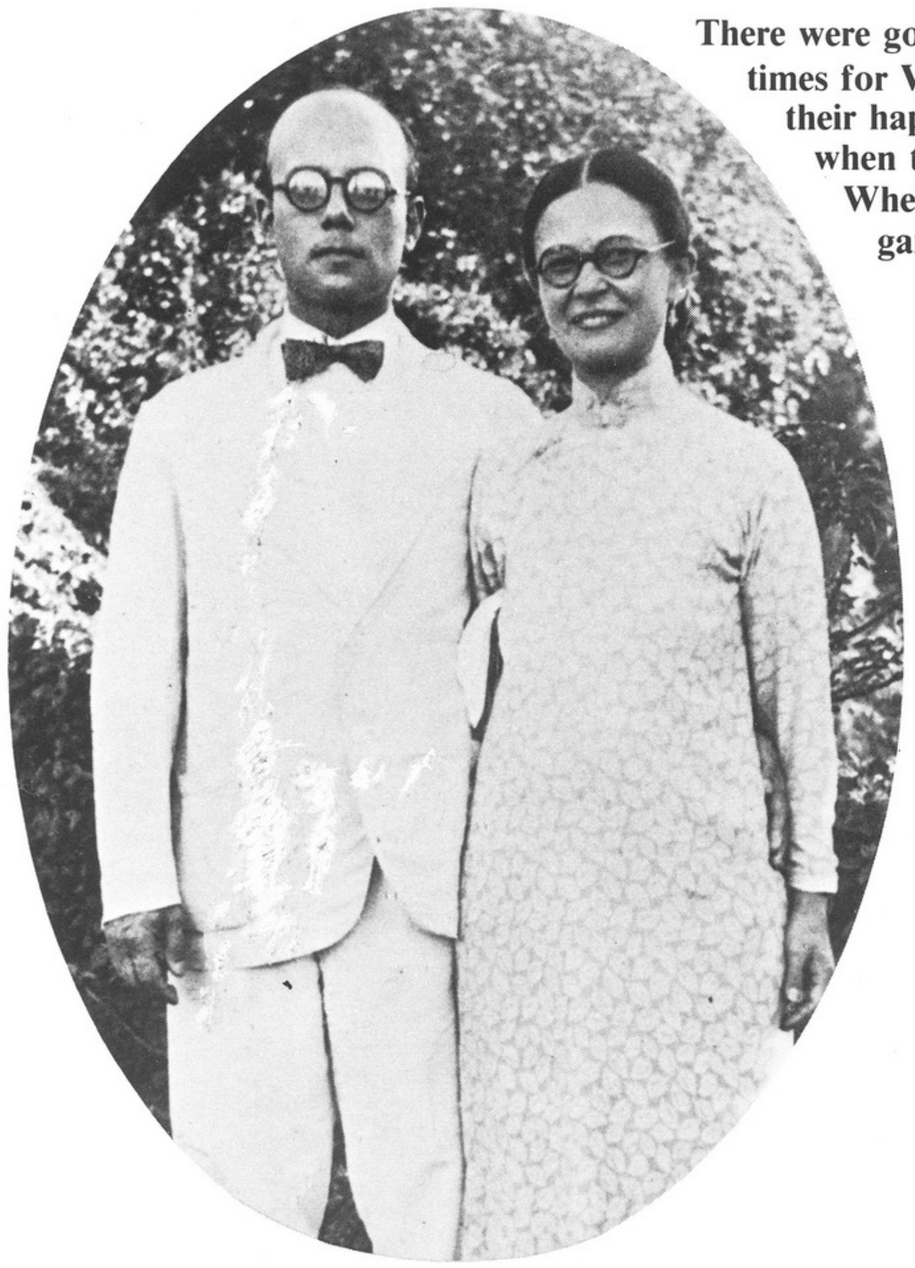
When the Japanese had miraculously left and the women had calmed down, she sent them home with a small packet of rice each.

The entire household was impressed with Vic's cool courage but all we did was to tease her for being such a battle-axe that even highly trained Alsatian dogs were frightened of her.

A few hours after the incident, she got a migraine attack. The apparent calm had taken its toll and my mother was inaccessible for a week.

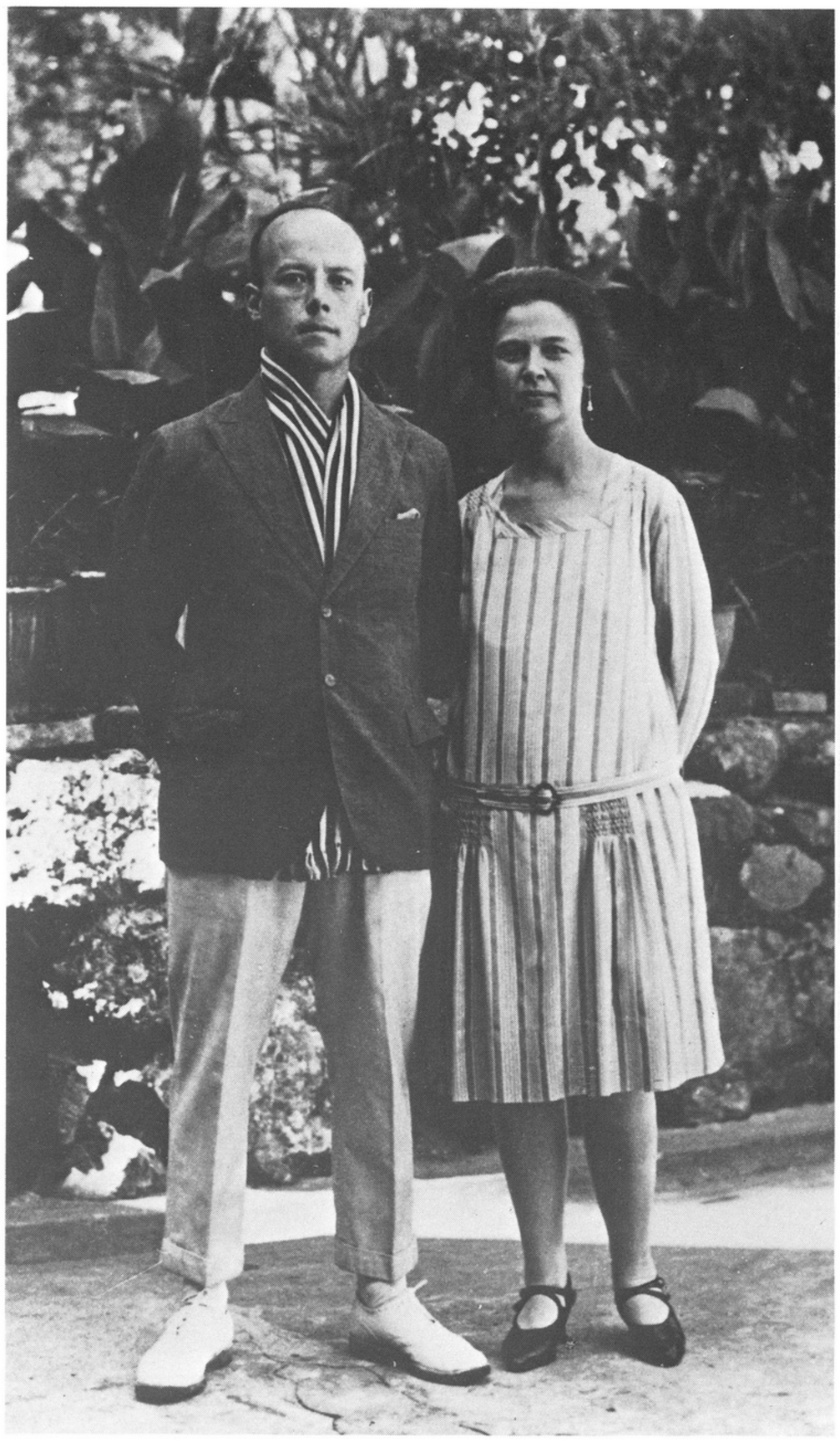
Victoria The Indomitable

When I caught bronchial pneumonia in the spring of 1937, it gave my sisters, who like Vic all considered themselves nurses, a chance to practise their medical skills.

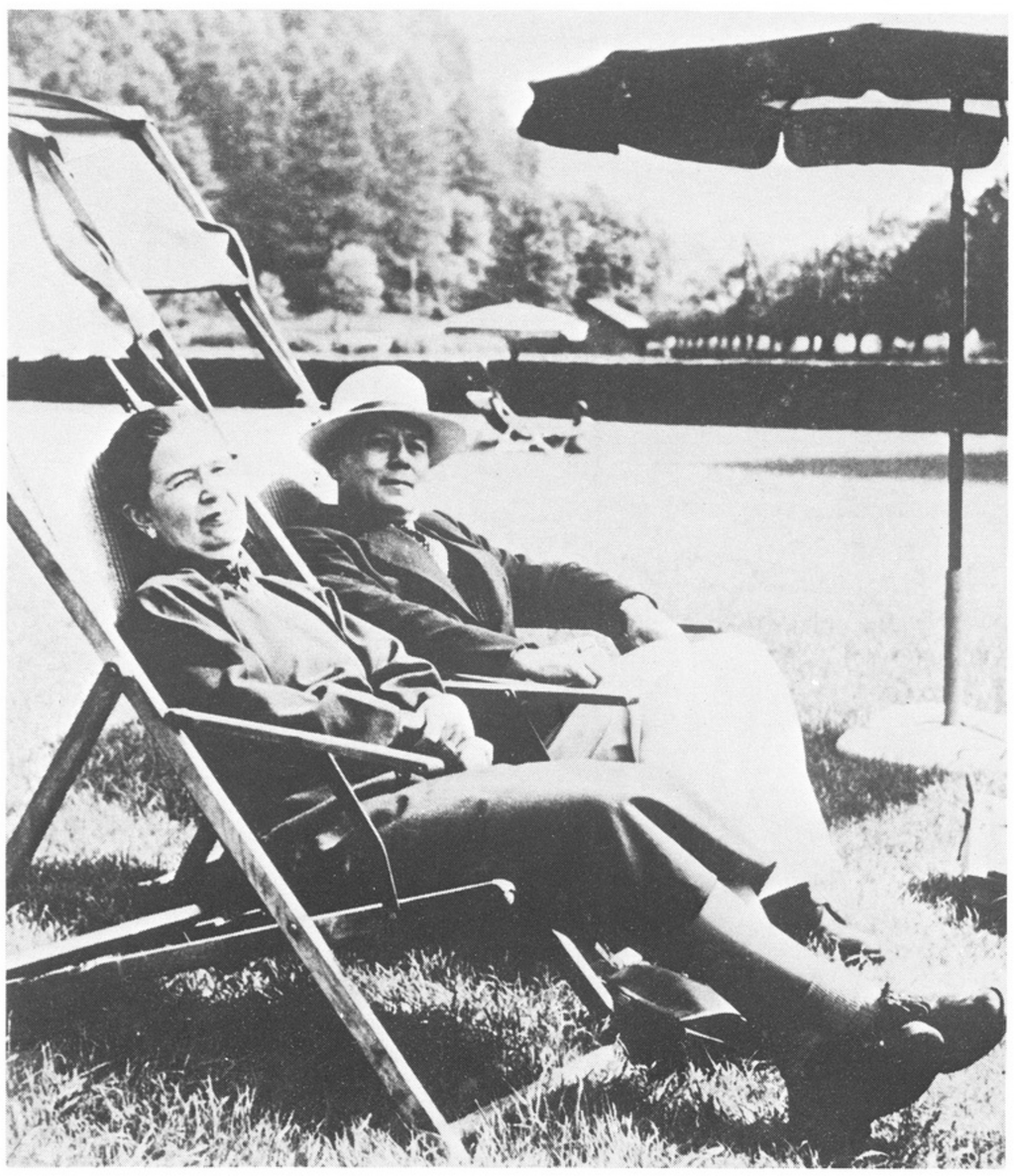


There were good times and bad times for Vic and M.K. — and their happiest times were when they were together. Whether strolling in the garden in 1933 . . .

M.K. And Victoria: An Undiminished Love



or on their way to a "flapper" party in 1928.



The trials of the war brought them even closer together and they became inseparable. On vacation in Europe in 1954.

Vic was also the practical member of our family.

She had a premonition of the war months before the Japanese invaded Hong Kong. She backed her hunch and quietly purchased sacks and sacks of rice. The sacks, hidden under layers of coal dust and dirt, filled most of the basement of Nettlewood.

The rice fed over 70 members of our extended family as well as some friends throughout the war and when we finally ran short, Vic sold what was left of the wonderful jewelry and silver she had received as wedding gifts.

M.K., being the eldest in his family, felt that he and his wife should set an example and make the sacrifices necessary so that no one should go hungry. He sold most of his treasured tennis championship cups.

Despite the hard times, I suffered little during the war and was, in truth, quite spoiled. The memory of my brother Wilbur's death still haunted my parents and they were petrified that they would lose me too. If there was a bit of meat, an egg or any milk to be had — I was the chap who got it.

Before the war, I was considered "delicate" because of an allergy to oil — the smallest drop gave me diarrhea. Even vegetables had to be boiled to make sure those that arrived on my plate contained no vegetable oil. That problem disappeared during the war.

Practical Vic. Vic certainly was the practical member of the family — much to my sisters' chagrin. The girls used to complain about Vic's seeming immunity to fashion trends. Rather than waste time shopping for cloth, she would buy one huge bolt of material and have three outfits made for each girl. They were not pleased. Here we are on a picnic on The Nufsed in 1939.

Wartime Mischief

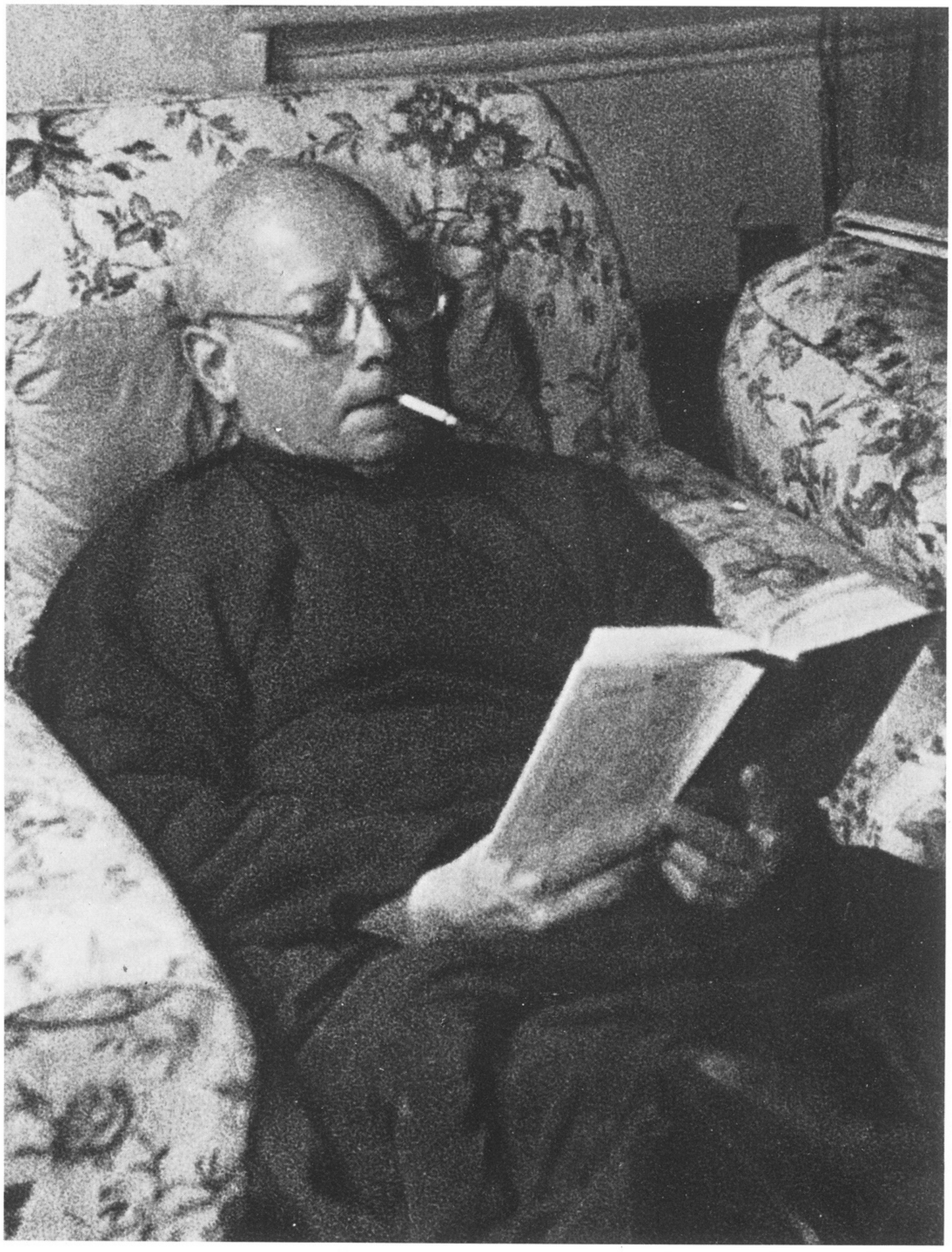
Besides rice, our basement hid other caches — my favourites were the firecrackers and the horde of Craven A cigarettes . . .

Firecrackers were a traditional gift to children on Chinese New Year and we got them by the boxload. But Father didn't like them. He was afraid we would burn ourselves or hurt our eyes and so he took them away . . . and stored them in the basement.

As far back as I can remember M.K. smoked cork-tipped Craven A's. The cigarettes came wrapped in lead foil and M.K. always saved the lead for use as doorstops — he hated banging doors.

When the war came, cigarettes became scarce and Craven A's were one of M.K.'s first sacrifices to the rationing effort. Shortly after he gave them up — I found the stock of Craven A's in the basement.

My best friend at the time was Berkley Thomas who was 9 — two years older than I — and who knew how to make "bombs" and "grenades" out of firecrackers and lead doorstops fashioned from Craven A foil.



As far back as I can remember, M.K. smoked cork-tipped Craven A cigarettes.

In April 1936, I was too slow to escape my amahs but . . .
by April 1937, I had my own car and was constantly trying to make a speedy getaway.

Berkley's father, the same Dr. Thomas who had once courted Vic, was the supervisor of a mental sanatorium in Western and I was occasionally allowed to visit my friend there. My tight security detail of amahs was considerably relaxed during the war as there was no money for salaries and most of our servants fled to China. I relished my freedom.

One day Berkley and I were playing with our bombs and I raced to the window of the clinic and threw one onto the street. The tiny bomb exploded in the midst of a passing Japanese patrol. Berkley and I fled — terrified. The Japanese later interrogated the lunatics but never made any sense out of their stories.

Somehow, Vic came to know of some of my daily antics and at bathtime she would recite a list of my day's mischief — punctuating the naughtier episodes with a sharp "whack." She finally gave up trying to discipline me — it hurt her hand too much and apparently had little effect on me.

After the war, I continued the "art" my friend had taught me. One day I threw one of my little bombs down a stairwell at the St. Stevens Girls School. The authorities were more efficient than the Japanese in discovering the culprit. They then persuaded my parents that my English was of too low a standard. The upshot of it was my being sent to Canton's Lingnam Primary School.

Tricking and evading the Japanese was great sport for a seven or eight year old boy and only many years later did I realize the risks I had taken.

One favourite game was to sneak into the Japanese garden behind our house and cut down the bamboo — which we needed for hanging clothes, for water pipes and for the tomatoes planted on the tennis court which had been dug up for a vegetable garden.

Phoebe lent me her bike in 1941 and I relished my freedom during the war.

Once, as the bamboo fell to my saw, a hornets' hive fell on my back. I had to finish my self-imposed work — put mud on the cut stump, lug the long bamboos past our house (so that the fallen leaves would point away from our house), carry them off the ground into our house, strip the leaves, and so forth. All the while the hornets were stinging. I've been frightened of flying insects ever since.

Besides tomatoes, we planted yams and peanuts in our garden and became quite expert farmers.

As our servants melted away — our pre-war household staff of 10 dwindled to three during the war — I was entrusted with several important chores.

One of my duties was to search under the leaves of each plant for worms. Another important job was very carefully carrying a little pan of rice each day from the basement to the roof. There, in a corner hidden from spying eyes on nearby Conduit Road, I would pour the rice into a flat, round basket and sift out the dead worms and small stones. I never could get rid of all the worms but Mother would say, "Never mind, it's protein."

Vic solved our lack of calcium by grinding carefully preserved egg shells into a fine powder and sprinkling it on our rice.

We wasted nothing — even excrement was saved in big drums for manure — and I learned to abhor waste. I have never eaten a tomato without its skin.

By the end of the war in 1945, Vic and I were tired but happy. She had given up trying to knock the mischief out of me — it hurt her hand too much!

M.K. was there to welcome the British back to Hong Kong in 1945. Sir Cecil Harcourt, head of Hong Kong's military government after the war, consulted frequently with M.K. on the reconstruction of the war-battered Colony.

By December 14, 1945, we were all back together again to celebrate Phoebe's and Vera's joint birthdays. During the war, the sleeves of my jacket had not kept pace with my arms! We were thin and tired but we posed for this photograph to show our family and friends aboard that we were all alive and well.

By 1947, the family was happy and healthy again.

Buried Treasure

I remember well the day after the war when M.K. and the manager of the Bank of China dug and dug in the back garden of Nettlewood and couldn't find the treasure chest of jewels. . .

It all started in the early days of the war when everyone in Hong Kong was burying their valuables. The bank manager, not knowing many people he could trust, came to M.K. with a large tin box packed with fabulous jewels that had been left for safekeeping in the bank's vaults by customers who had fled Hong Kong.

There were necklaces dripping with rubies and diamonds, earrings of shimmering emeralds, rings set with every precious stone found on earth, ancient gold coins and lockets and, of course, priceless ornaments of jade. We never learned how much the treasure was worth but it was indisputably a king's ransom.

The manager was trying to arrange his own escape from Hong Kong and M.K. agreed to bury the box in our garden. An X marked the spot.

The war was long and, after awhile, M.K. simply forgot about the hidden treasure.

The bank manager returned but did not approach M.K. about the box because he was positive we had been forced to dig it up and sell the valuables to buy food. It was well known that Vic had fed many, many people throughout the occupation and the banker feared that to raise the subject of the buried treasure with M.K. would embarrass his distinguished friend.

But knowing M.K., he finally decided that it was not possible he would have taken the treasure and not mentioned it. He brought the matter up. M.K. was horrified that he could have forgotten such a thing and the two immediately went up to Nettlewood and headed into the garden to start digging. They dug and dug and dug . . . but beneath the X was nothing but dirt.

Hours later they finally located the treasure trove — intact. The alluvion soil had slipped downhill over the years and the chest had slid a considerable distance with it.

M.K. in 1946

Surrounded By Women

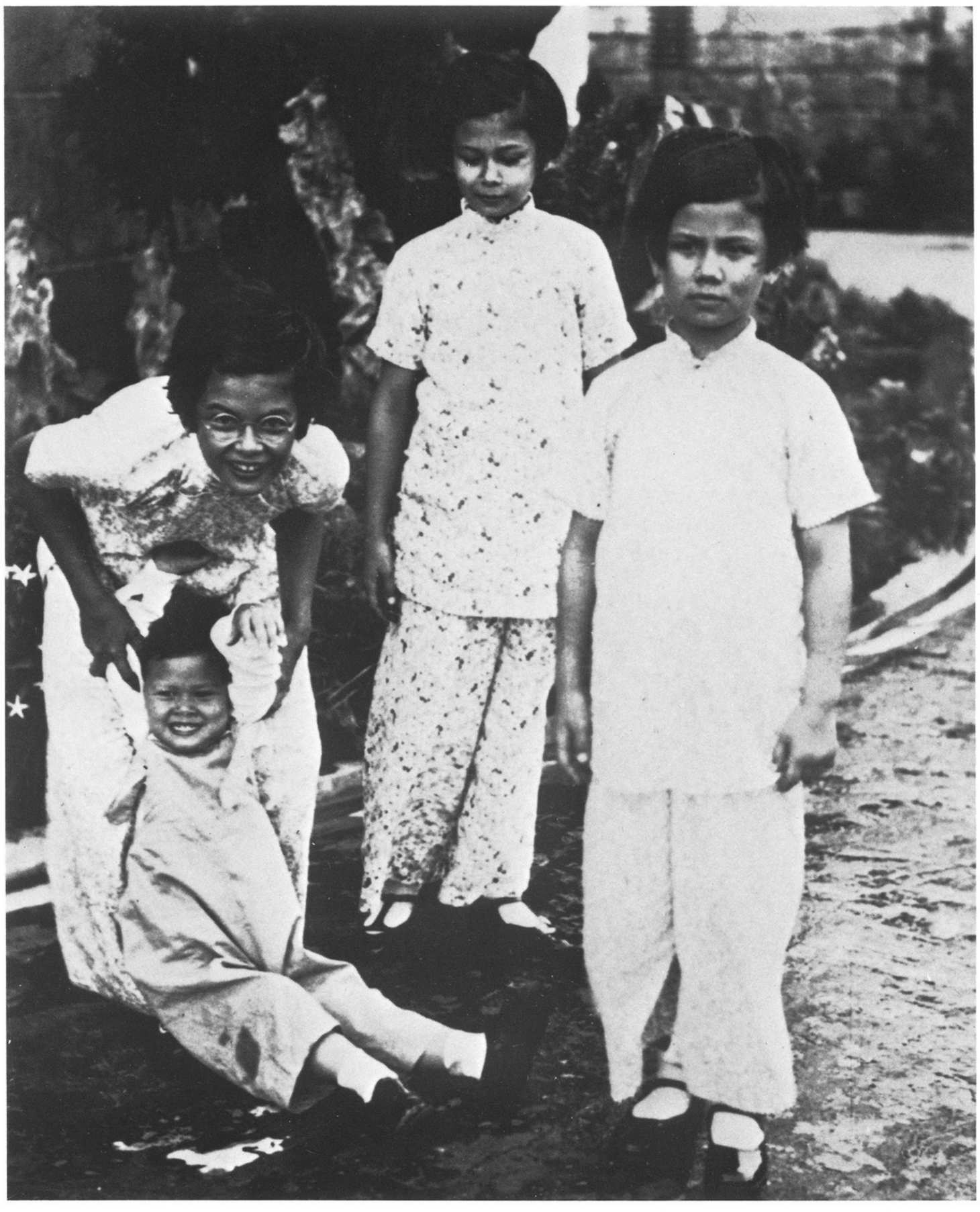
After the war, my sisters returned to Nettlewood from China and we tried to resume family life. Growing up surrounded by bossy sisters was hardly my idea of paradise when I was a boy but they were tomboys and generally good fun.

My favourite sister is Vera Joyce although we didn't always get along. She was a wayward sort of child with flashes of honesty and just as spoiled as I, partly because she was so pretty.

She refuses to tell the stories but during the war years she spent in China she is supposed to have engaged in some espionage against the Japanese. She also held sharpshooting contests with American GIs (and always outshot them). After the war, she flashed around Hong Kong in a huge Hudson motor car.

In 1951, she married Hui Yin Kan and, as with the rest of our family, we started to lose touch with each other as we each focused on our own children.

Surprisingly, it was Vic who encouraged all my sisters in their tomboyishness — she wanted her daughters to be strong independent women. In our family, Vic ruled on the question of education and M.K. adopted a "hands off" attitude.

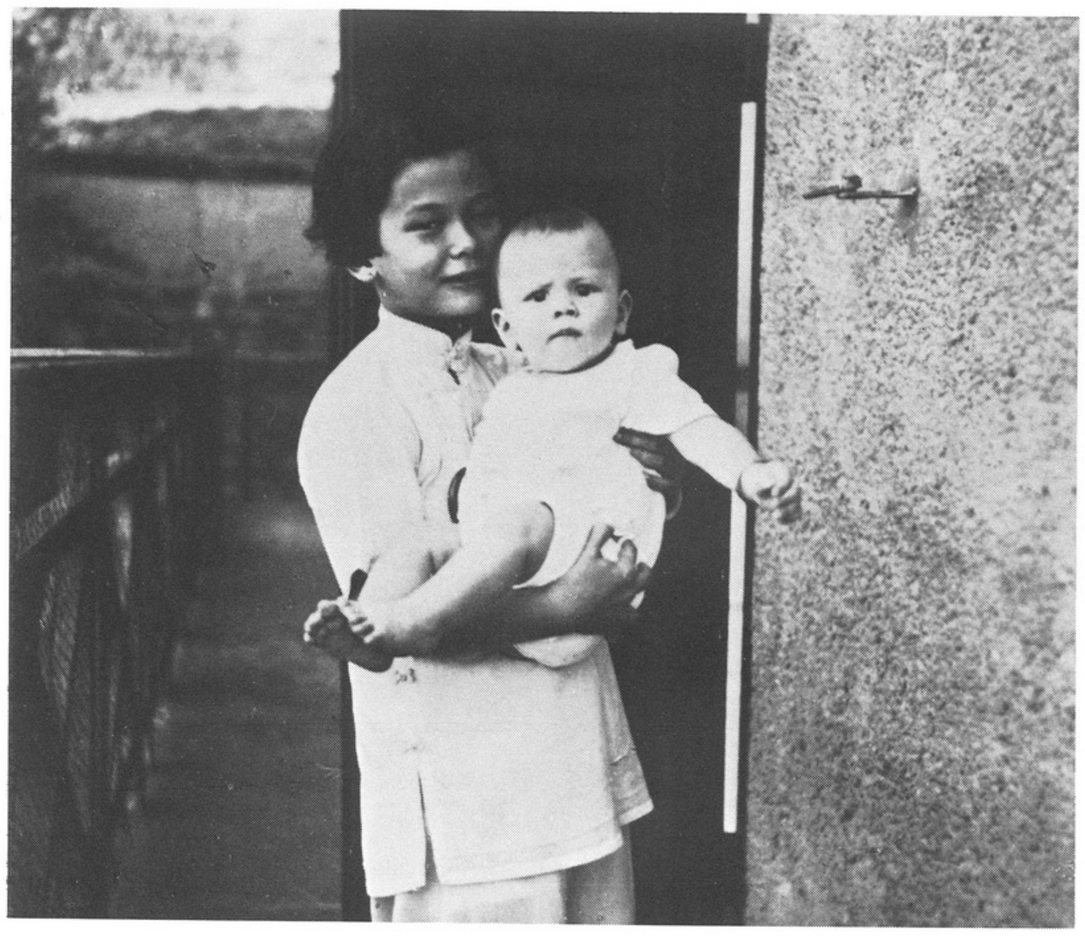


My sisters seemed to consider chasing me down every time I tried to take a stroll their most important chore.

The worst was when Vic took me along to her ladies garden parties — like this farewell for Sir Andrew's wife, Lady Caldecott in March 1937. Never has one man been cuddled, chucked under the chin and cooed at . . .

Only 10 days old and the women were closing in . . .

When I was five months old, Phoebe had taken charge. Vic said she spoiled me but that's not the way I remember it.



New Year's Day 1937 — my sisters and their friends treated me like another of their dolls.

But they were good sports in April 1937 when I decided to learn to ride a bike.

SURROUNDED BY WOMEN

Vic had what Vera calls "crazy ideas about schooling" and all the girls were sent to the same establishment as I — Lingnam Middle School on Stubbs Road, a boys' school. Vera remembers being bullied in school because she was a girl and not pure Chinese. But I rarely had trouble because I was tall for my age and bigger than most of my schoolmates.

"T.S. has so many fights in school — if anyone says anything rude to him he would knock their teeth out," Vera used to tell people without a hint of embarrassment. "His report card is all reds and he did not care."

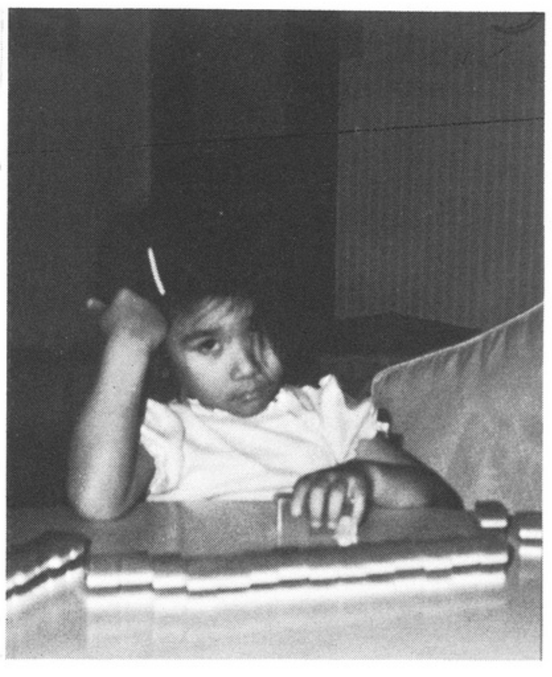
Vera also bragged that I so bullied my Chinese tutors (hired by Vic because we did not study classical Chinese at school) that eight of them resigned, one after the other. The ninth stuck it out.

It was Vic who decided that I should go to England when I was 14 or 15. "She's afraid if you stay here you'll start going to 'joints,'" Vera told me.

Despite being treated like boys at school, my sisters often felt like second class citizens in our extended family.

Vera remembers Grand-Uncle Ho Kam Tong, one of Sir Robert's brothers, coming to pay his condolences to M.K. after Wilbur's death. "I'm so sorry," Vera quotes him as saying, "it's such a pity it couldn't have been one of the girls."

Glued to my chair!: Vic made me wear a tie for my lessons with my first Chinese tutor, Ah Gu, who appears calm and unharried in November 1938. Perhaps that is because I was literally glued to my chair. In accordance with classical Chinese tradition, on the first day of class, Chinese tutors put a symbolic glob of glue on the student's seat to make sure they keep their full attention. I'm sure I got my own back with dear old Ah Gu and the seven other tutors I managed to drive away with my mischief before meeting my match with the ninth. To help Jane Curzon learn her Chinese characters in a less painful way, I had special Majong tiles carved for her.



Vera may have considered Vic's ideas about education a bit strange, but Phoebe didn't seem to mind to bit. Here is Phoebe in July 1937 with her graduating class from the Lingnam Branch School on Stubbs Road.

M.K. puts the finishing touches on Vera's bridal outfit before her wedding to Hui Yin Kan on 30 March 1951

My eldest sister, Phoebe Gladys, paid a lot of attention to me and seemed to consider my arrival in the family like the gift of a new doll. Phoebe dressed me up in funny hats, wheeled me about and chased me down. She tells a story of when I was three and liked to pick flowers. One day she took me aside and told me that flowers had mommies. I was stunned and began to cry. I felt terrible that the flowers I had destroyed would never see their mommies again and I never picked flowers again.

Vic insists that Phoebe spoiled me and always blamed Phoebe, as well as M.K., for turning me into what she termed "a handful."

Well, I may have been "a handful" but I was never vicious. It just seemed that if there were trouble to be found — it found me. My cousins used to say I smelt of iodine.

When I grew older, Vic admitted that perhaps she had been a bit too strict with me — especially in expecting me to live up to the model Wilbur, a boy she described as "so obedient, so loving, one could say he never did wrong."

"You were a real boy, T.S.," she told me, a bit ruefully, "and one could say there was very little mischief you didn't get up to."

Vic found me a "armful" when I was five months old.

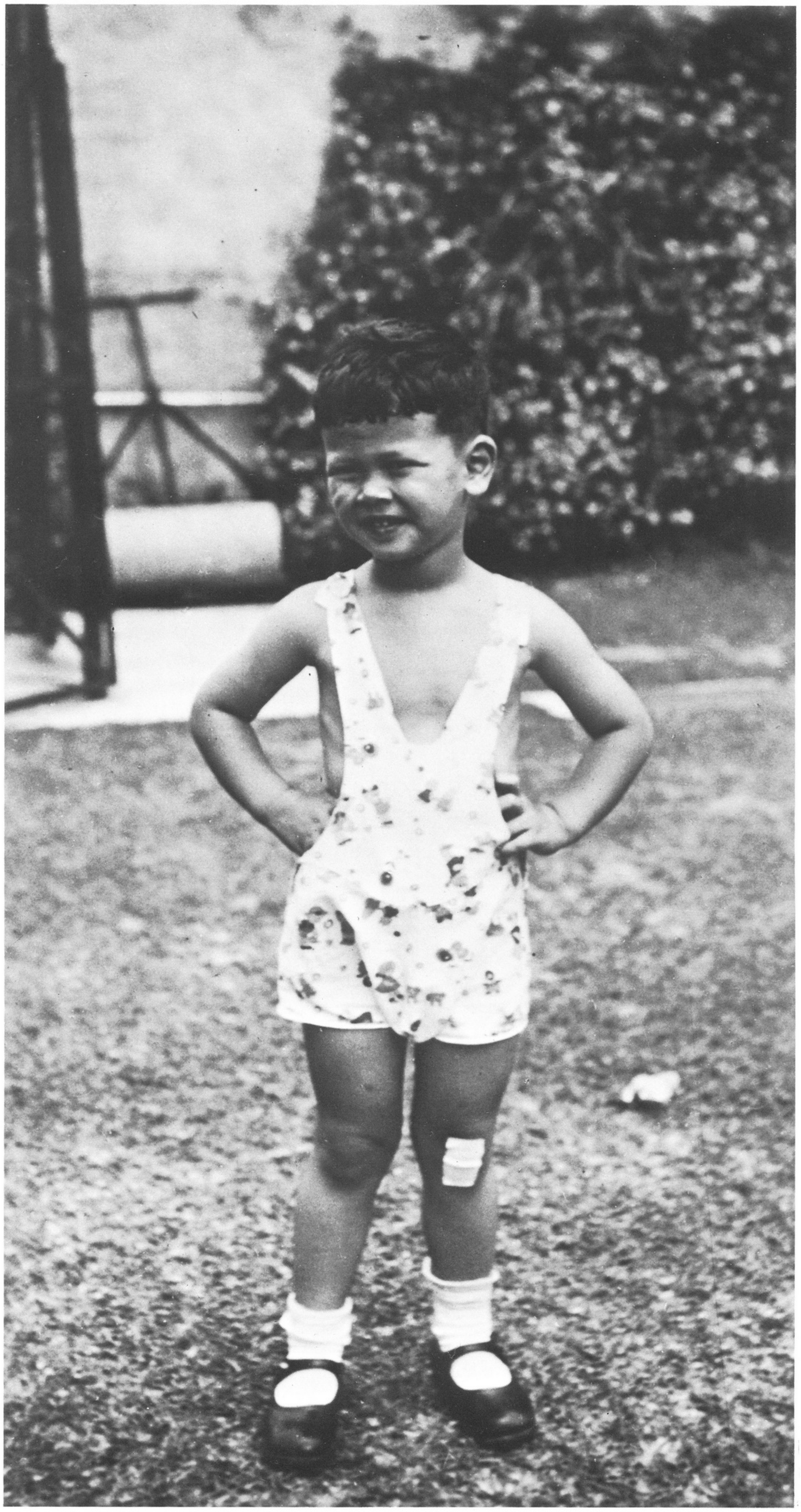
By July 1935 and the age of six months I was giving the family what I considered coherent political lectures.

August 1936: 18 months old and STILL in short pants!

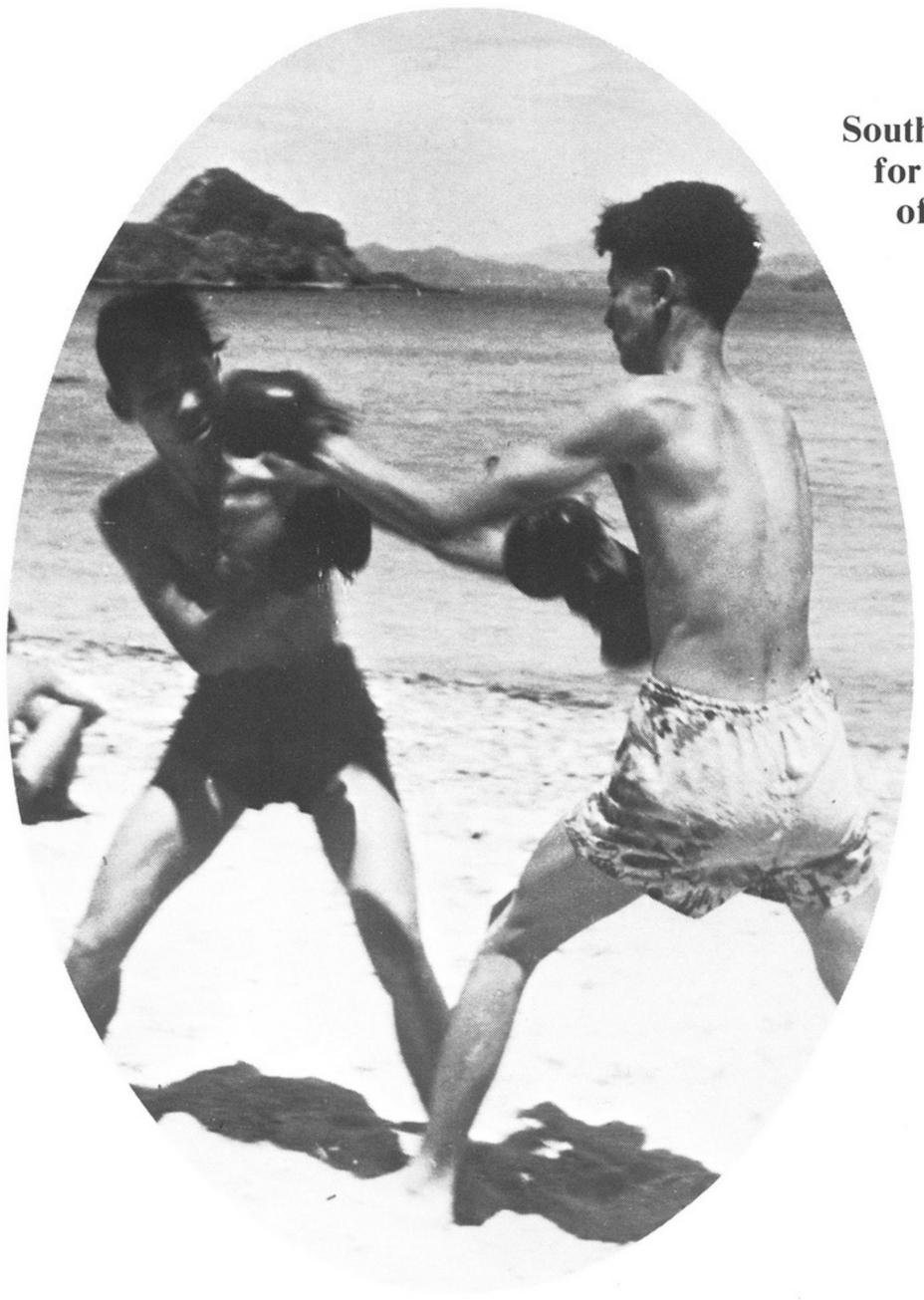
January 1936: One at last!

Christmas 1939. The girls insisted on teaching me to use MY train set.

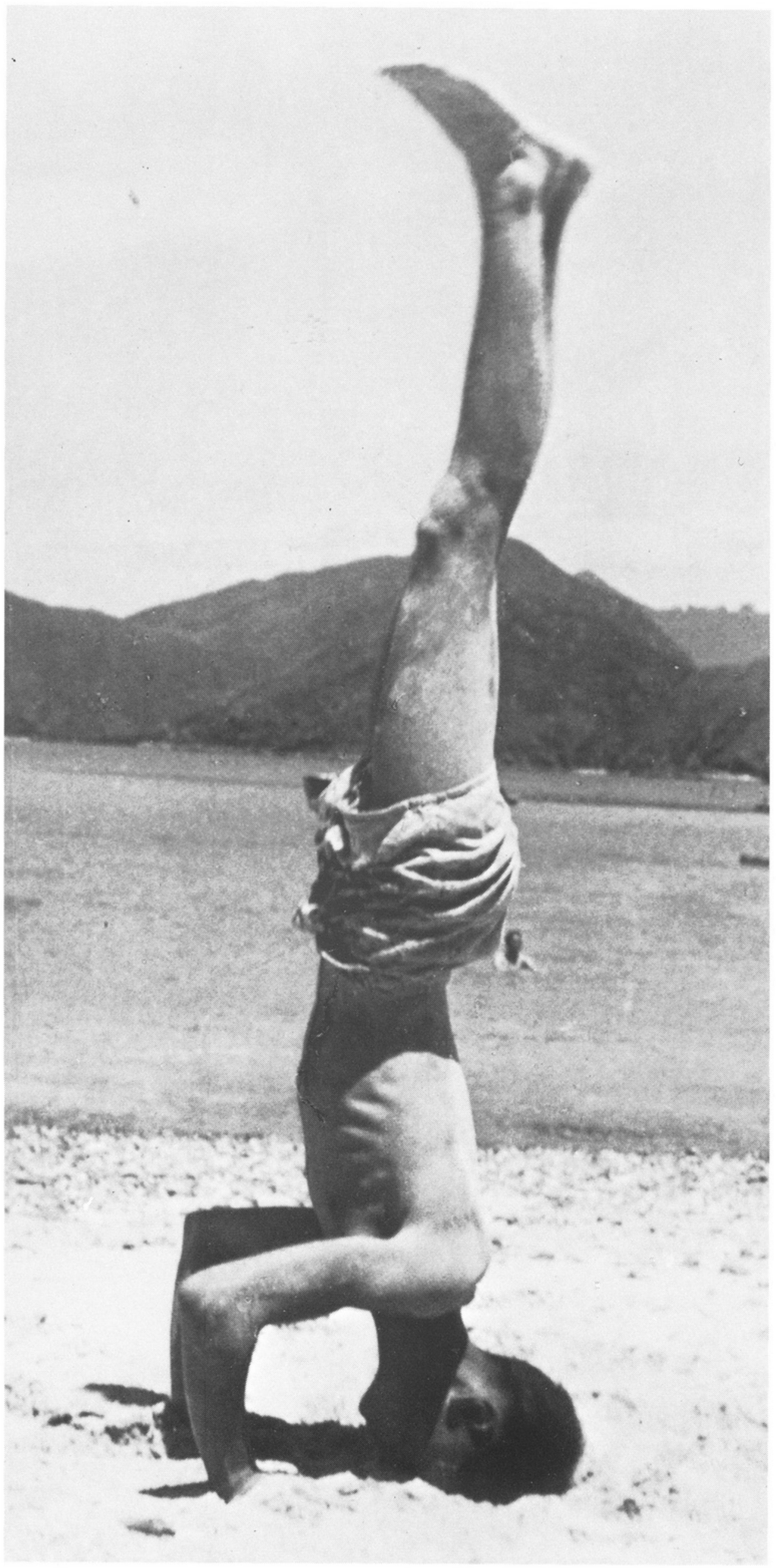
At the "Falls" in April 1938. I always sported a bandaid someplace and, as my cousins said, I reeked of iodine.

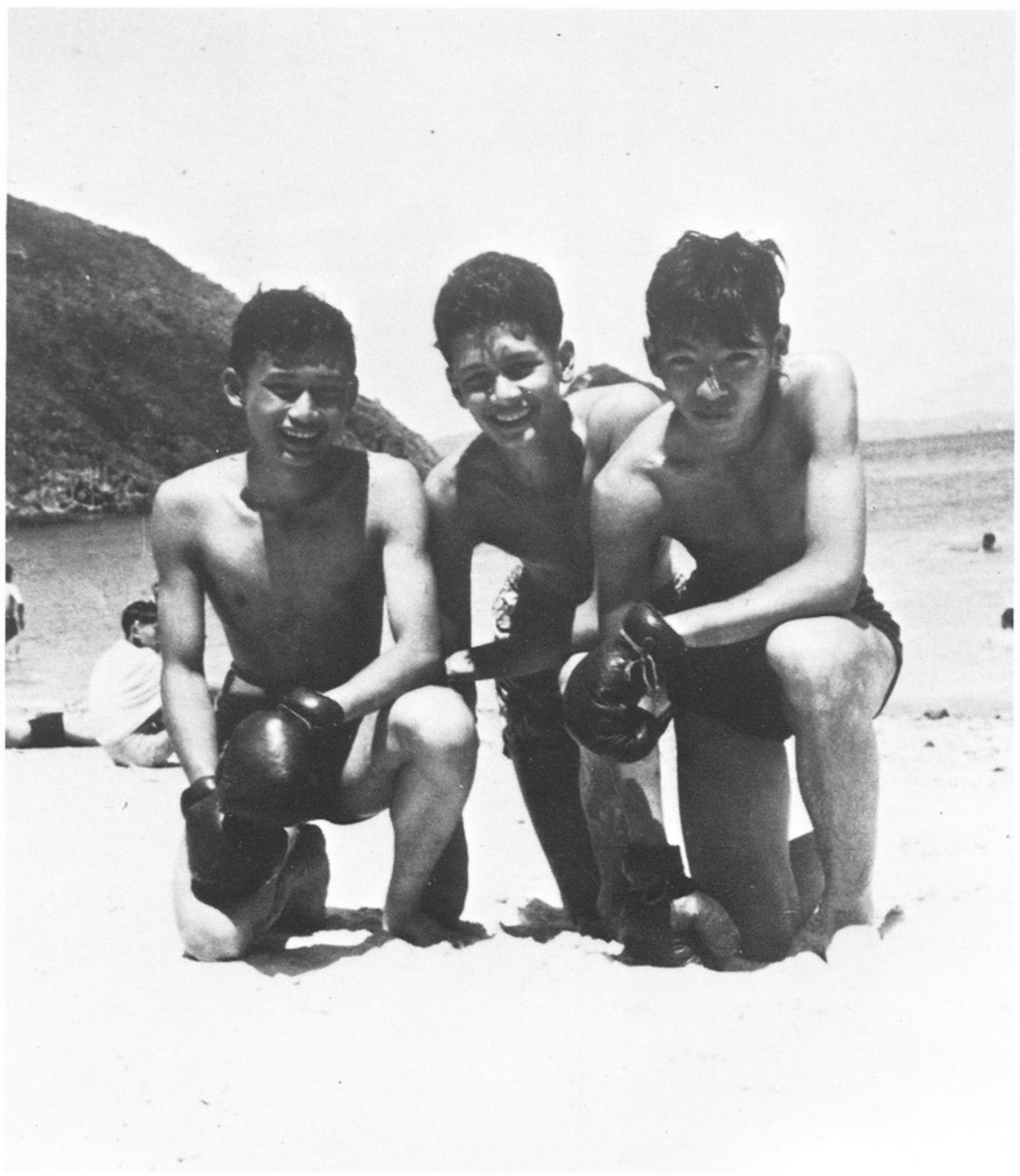


As I got older, my accidents got worse. I still bear the scar from this one in late 1946. It was one of those interminable luncheon parties and I was anxious to be off to play tennis. When I was finally given permission to leave the table, I dashed off to change in my room over the garage. I slipped and hit the steel supports of the staircase. Unfazed, I ran on holding my head and it was only when I let go of the wound to open the cupboard door that the blood came pouring out. There was no tennis for me for weeks.



South Beach was the perfect spot for a boxing match in the summer of 1950.

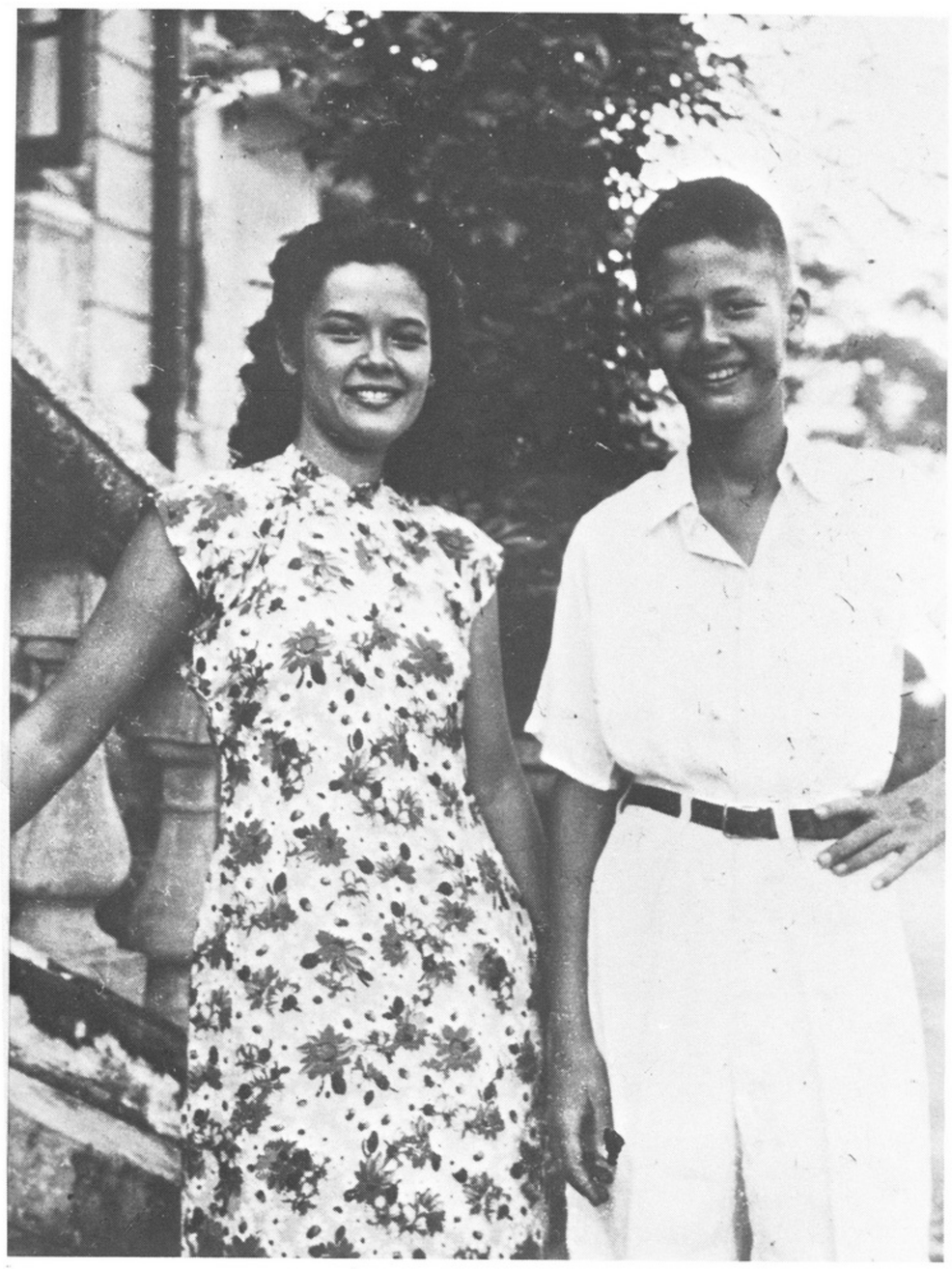




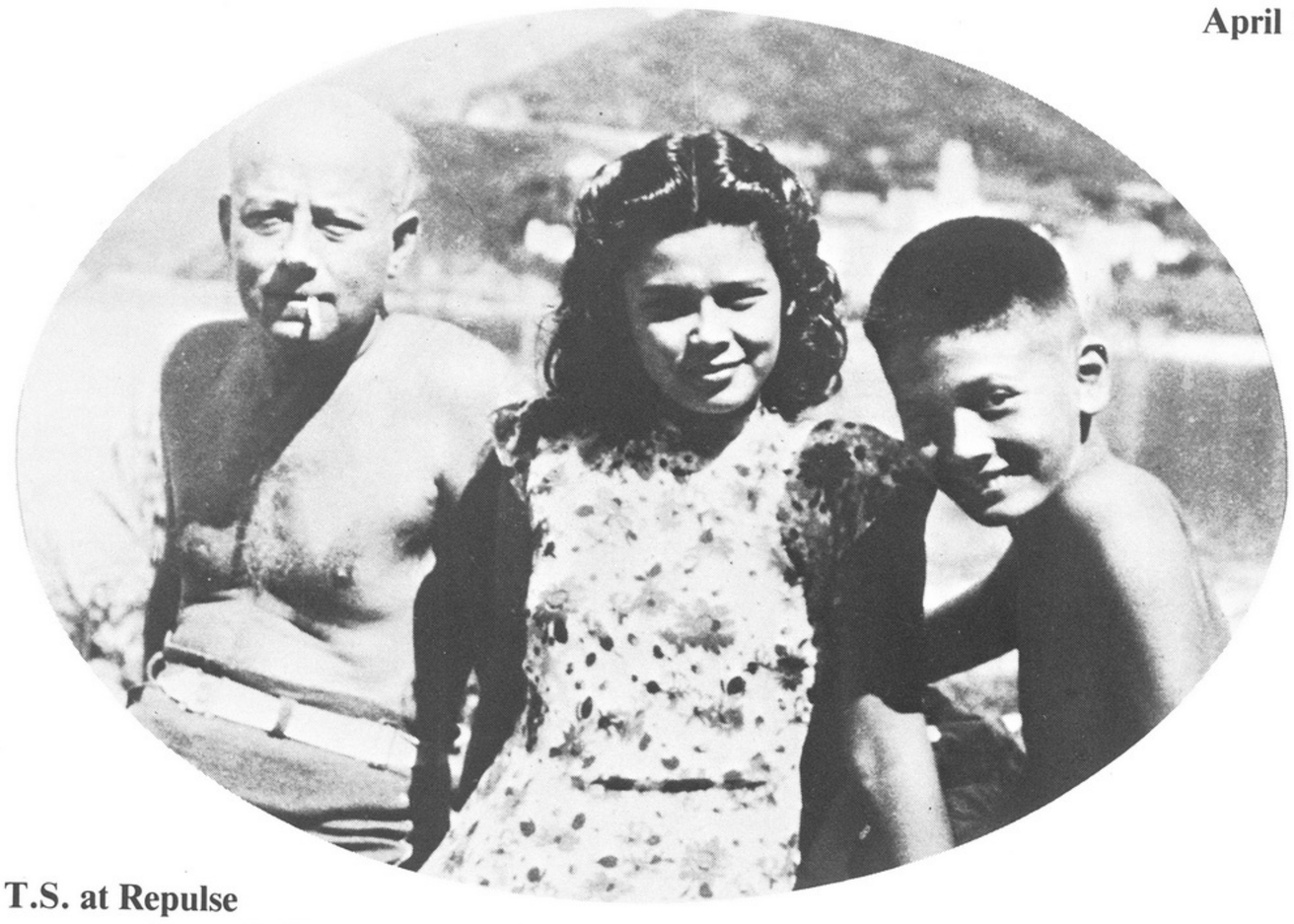
Time out.

Few men could complain about being surrounded by such pretty sisters. Here are Phoebe and Vera on their way to a ball at Government House in 1947

SURROUNDED BY BEAUTIES



Phoebe and I at Repulse Bay in April 1947



M.K., Phoebe and T.S. at Repulse Bay: 1947

After the war, our doctors said Rita had TB after her long ordeal in China. My parents, remembering the death of Wilbur when he was only 14, decided to take no chances and sent Rita to Australia. M.K. was a firm believer in the beneficial effects of a change of climate and of sea journeys in particular. I was chosen to accompany her and in 1948 we set off by ship for Sydney.

A friend of Aunt Jean Gittins was to meet us in Sydney but as the ship docked I spotted an old friend of mine — Jessie Wong, the sister of the one-time, famous editor of the South China Morning Post, Harry Ching.

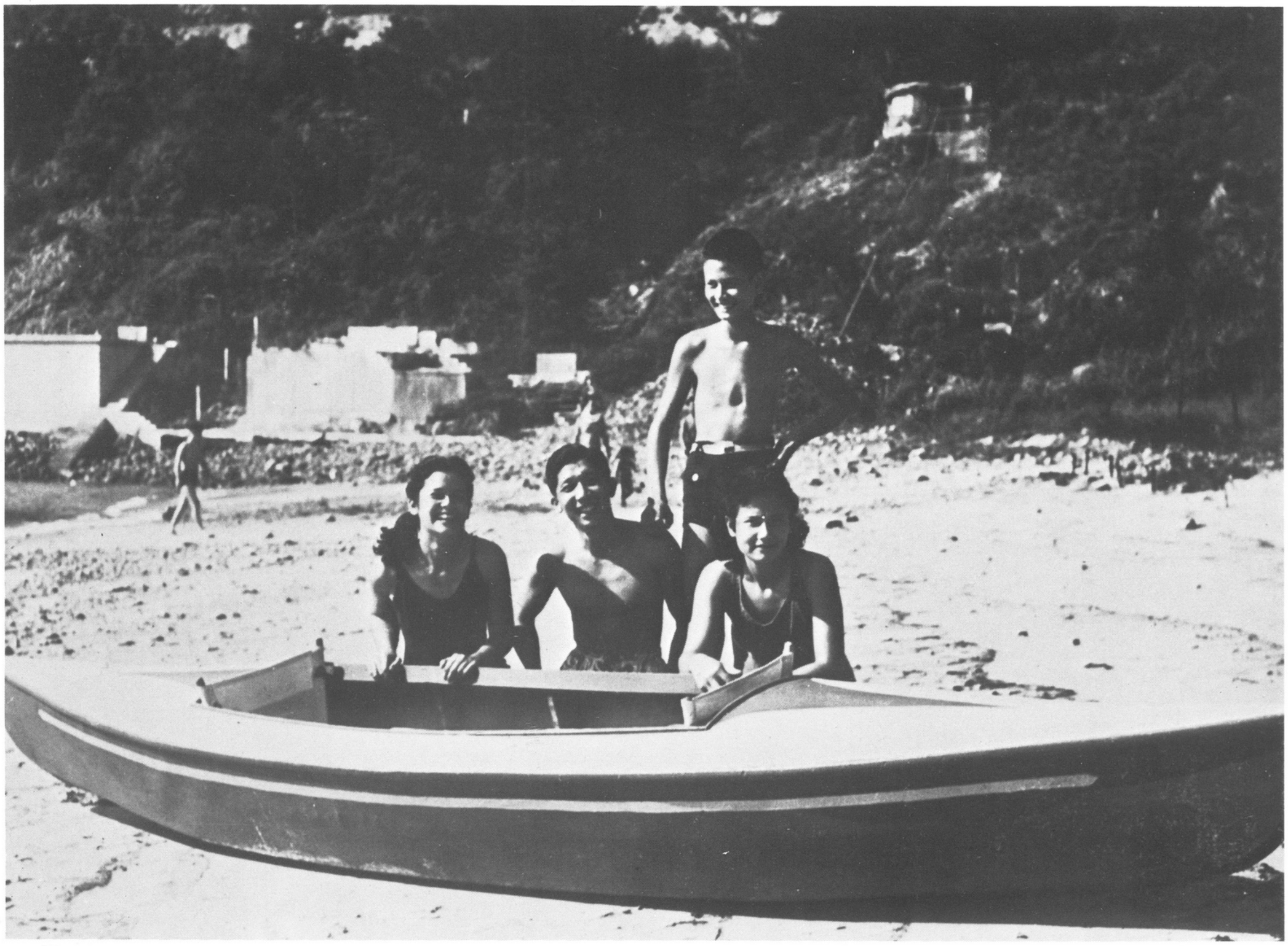
She had stayed with us for sometime during the war and taught me English, particularly by reading Dickens to me. I seem to remember the Merchant of Venice as well. Jessie and her sister Florrie had heard we were coming and had driven out to meet the boat.

I waved happily to Jessie and Rita asked me: "Is that Aunt Jean's friend?"

"Yes," I answered quickly. I liked Jessie much more than Aunt Jean's friend, whom I hardly knew.

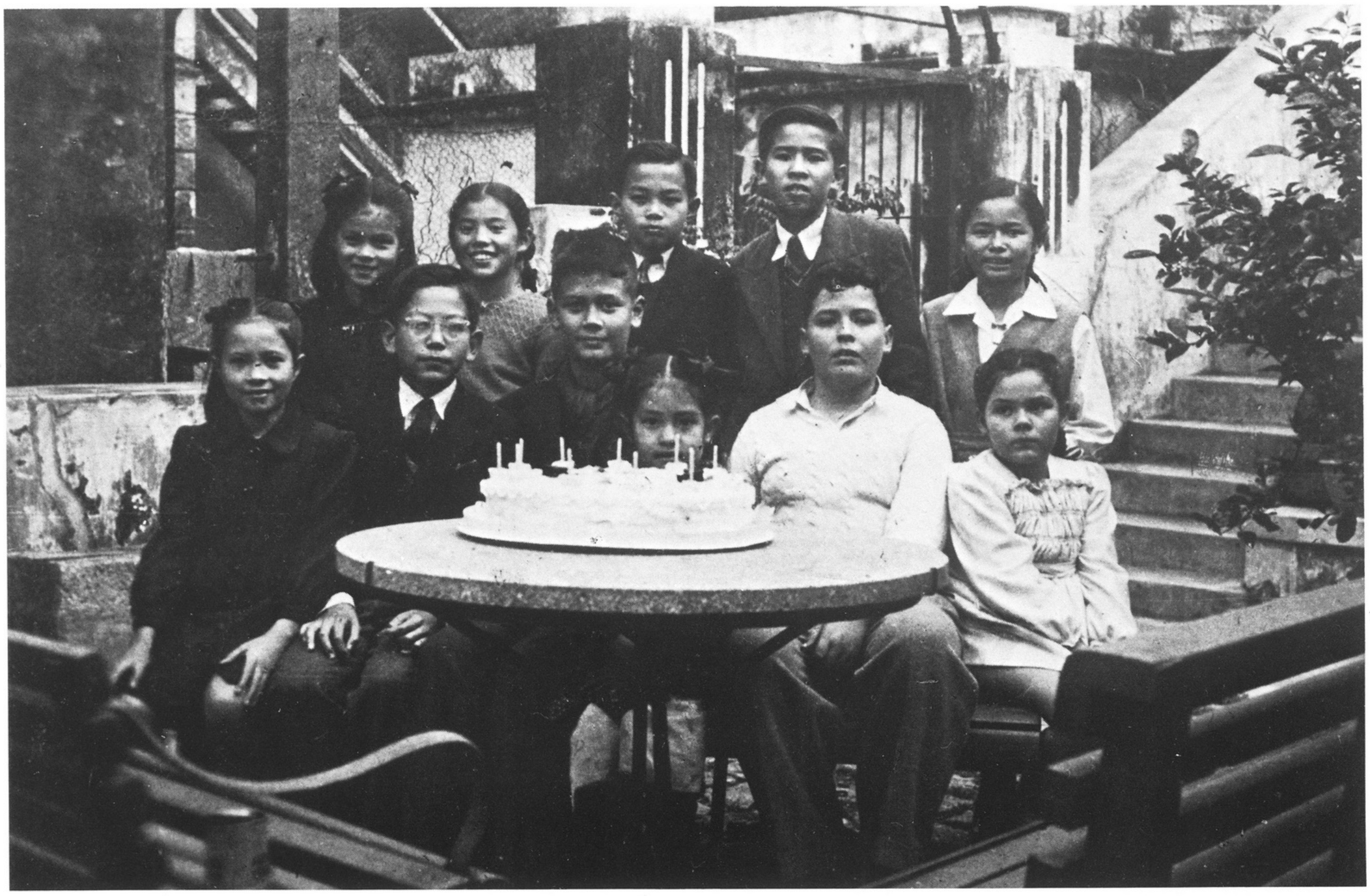
So we went home with Jessie and I had a marvelous time for a few days until Rita found out. She didn't think it was funny at all and we had to move back to Aunt Jean's friend's house. I remember their toilet in the back garden. It operated on centrifugal force and was quite revolting.

Arriving at Sydney Harbour in July 1948, with Rita aboard the SS Soochow. We flew home via Singapore in a seaplane — a real adventure.



On South Beach, April 4, 1947 with Rita, Phoebe and Harry's son Henry Ching.

With Jean Gittins and her children Elizabeth and John in Australia. August 1948.



Helping celebrate my 12th birthday on January 23, 1947 were: Mildred Chaun Wendy Yeo Hugh Chaun Dick Yeo Daphne Yeo Vivian Litton Henry Litton T.S. Junie Cheng Bobby Ho Min Ho

By September 2nd, 1950, I was ready for my first
"dinner-dance" — a gala affair given the
The Peak by Gay O'Connor and Shirley Calthrop.
The suffering gentlemen all grinned with embarrassment
for this group portrait.
The lovely ladies, however, all seemed
quite pleased with themselves.

Merry England

My memories of my school years in England are of one delightful escapade after another. My cousin, and my friend, Norman Lo was in England too and often joined me in my adventures.

One day we decided to go sailing in Norfolks Broads in England. Neither of us had done any sailing — much less handled a boat alone — so we bought a teach-yourself-to-sail book to take along. We leased a yacht by mail, a Shearwater Class. The owner insisted on insurance and the form asked for our "grade" as sailors. We blithely but rashly wrote down "expert."

When we got aboard, we were not even sure how to get the thing moving. Being cautious, we tied a basket to the front of the craft in case we rammed into something taking off. Being extra cautious, we went back to the shop and bought four extra "fend offs." This must have made the captain uneasy because he rushed down to the dock to see us off.

We spent a week slowly learning to navigate. We didn't knock the boat around at all and there wasn't a scratch on her when we returned.

Another time, Norman and I decided to learn to fly and hired little planes called Chipmunks. We were able to make our first solo flights after only nine hours with an instructor. This was considered good for week-end learners.

Norman, who was also a favourite of M.K., died tragically in an air crash on the 20th of December 1958.

It wasn't all study in England! There were skiing trips to France.

And there was skating with Norman's friend Gerhard Wagner who was an outstanding athlete in the Hong Kong University and was the chief contender with Norman for the decathlon which Norman won. Here we are showing off — the first time on skates for both of us.

There were bike trips when M.K. came to visit and

picnics in the backyard of Poynings Way with Vera's family, M.K., Vic and Norman. Here we are in 1953.

During my years at Wadham College, Oxford, I was given an annual allowance of 1,000 pounds to spend as I liked — after the tuition fees of 99 pounds per term were paid. That left me the sumptuous sum of about 700 pounds for travel, clothes, books and holidays — and it was usually gone within the first three months.

When I was really broke I could always stay with Vera at the house M.K. had purchased in North London. Vera lived there with her husband Hui Yin Kan who was studying chemistry.

Sometimes I did odd jobs — tending bar, washing dishes, delivering parcels and so forth.

As an articled clerk, I was not paid a salary but by then I was already earning most of my spending money playing bridge.

When I could afford it, I liked the Turkish baths on Jermyn Street where for 7s 6d one could have a steam bath, an icy dip, a massage administered by hefty chaps who seemed to delight in breaking your bones and a long, deep sleep in a huge dormitory with ham and eggs in the morning. A leather thong attached the locker key to one's wrist.

Poynings Way, London, 1952. It was good to have Vera, her husband Kan and son Geoffrey so close while I was at school in England.

And I even had my own room...

But trying to spend a lazy day in bed often met with opposition.

In 1953, Vic and M.K. visited London and the house at 19 Poyning's Way never had such good "help." While Vic did the cooking, M.K. put the wash out to dry and . . .

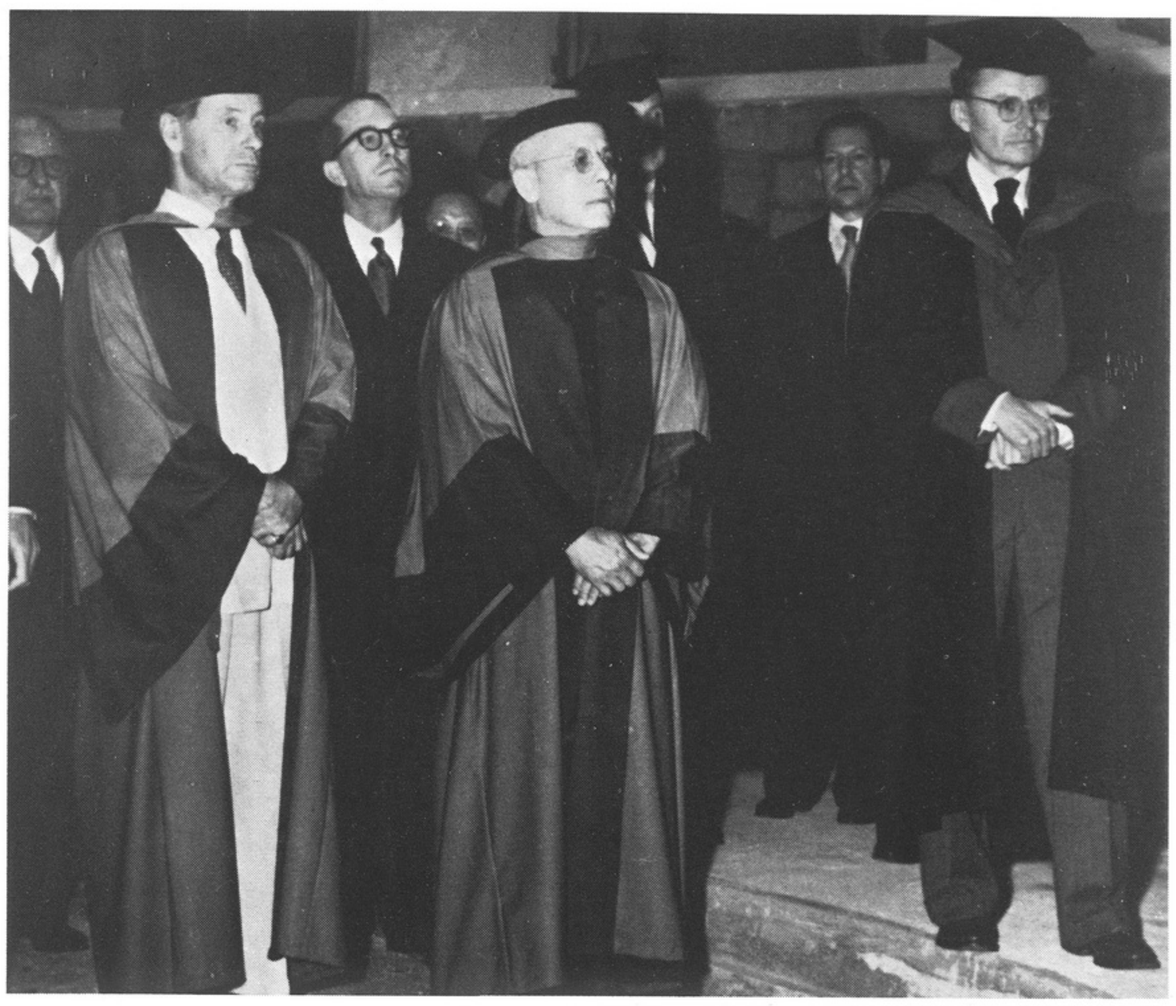
pruned the cherry tree for firewood. He loved to spend an evening in front of a roaring fire.

Shortly after I began school in England, M.K. and Vic treated me to a trip to Switzerland. M.K. was quite keen on "drinking in" the local flavour . . .

M.K. and Vic were at the airport to meet me when I arrived home on July 26, 1954. It was one of only three trips I made back to Hong Kong during my nine years in England.

M.K. wore many hats — this one for an official function in the mid-1950s.

Lawrence Kadoorie took this photo of M.K. during a visit to the China Light & Power Co. in April 1948. M.K. was on the board of directors.



M.K. receiving an Hon. LLD at Hong Kong University in 1951.

Relaxing with a game of bridge in 1934.

The evening before he died, M.K. co-hosted a dinner for the Duke of Edinburgh, who later wrote Vic: "I shall always remember him as a charming and considerate host and a real gentleman in every sense of the word."

Taking Over

In our funny family, feelings run too deep. M.K. was only 67 when he died on March 7th 1959. About a week earlier, my instincts sent foreboding messages. To that extent we were very close. Whereas I usually wrote home once a month, I wrote three letters back that week. Vic later told me he had received and read all three before he died.

When the cable came, I knew precisely what it was. I was curiously calm about it . . . it had put an end to the agony of worry.

I flew home for the funeral.

The services, including one of the last big funeral processions seen in Hong Kong, were held on 12th March. One ceremony insisted upon by Uncle Robbie (General Ho Shai Lai) required me to climb a flight of steps on my knees — the custom when one was so unfilial as to have been absent from one's father's deathbed.

I felt dazed, totally dazed and it wasn't until weeks afterwards that I cried.

M.K.'s funeral procession

Vic took on her share of the hefty schedule of official appearances. In October 1955, she launched the S.S. "Eastern Argosy" at Dumfries, Scotland.

M.K. gallantly held the umbrella while the "godmother" received her bouquet.

Once the shock was over, the realities of our situation became all too vivid. I was now head of my branch of the Lo family and there was Vic to worry about.

M.K.'s insistence on preserving the family honour was often a drain on our family fortunes. On at least three occasions that I remember, M.K. used all of his hard-earned savings to "make good the losses" of in-laws who had engaged in what he termed "commercial adventures."

His own sisters constantly sought favors from M.K. throughout his life and his inability to refuse help held his family together at considerable cost, particularly emotionally.

After M.K.'s death, Vic became the focal point of the family though she seemed to have been drained of the enormous strength she had always shown.

M.K. did not leave me an easy path to follow — he was as determined as I that I would not be one of those sons who lives on his father's name and money.

The greatest moral support I had were my memories of M.K. — how he loved to tell jokes, how he always worried about inconveniencing anyone whether they be the cook, the boatboy or the Governor, how he conscientiously went to the office every day at 8:40 a.m. and never took a break for lunch . . .

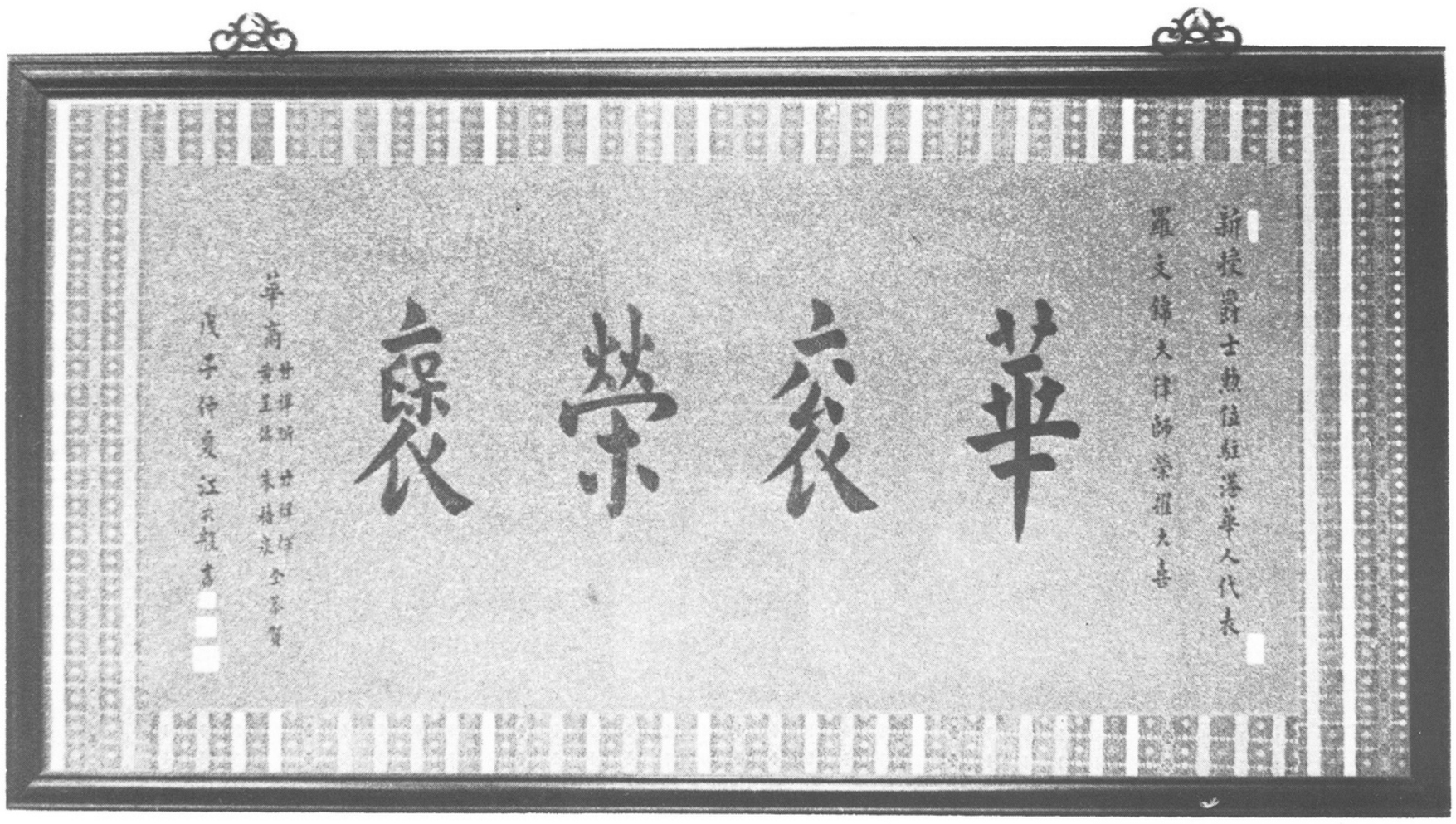
M.K. was from very early days the rock of our huge extended family of Lo's and Ho's, and later of Hong Kong.

M.K. was appointed a Member of the Executive Council on the 28th May 1946 and remained an active member until his death. Then, much as it is now, the Executive Council — or ExCo as it is popularly called — was the apex of the government's consultative machine.

If Hong Kong has an equivalent of the British Cabinet, it is ExCo. The government is required to seek ExCo's advice and the Council is the main curb on the otherwise unlimited power of the Governor.

ExCo meets once a week with the Governor presiding and various papers on government policy or proposed legislation are presented for its advice. No legislation is introduced and no government policy is made or changed without its prior advice and agreement.

M.K., shortly before his death on March 7, 1959.

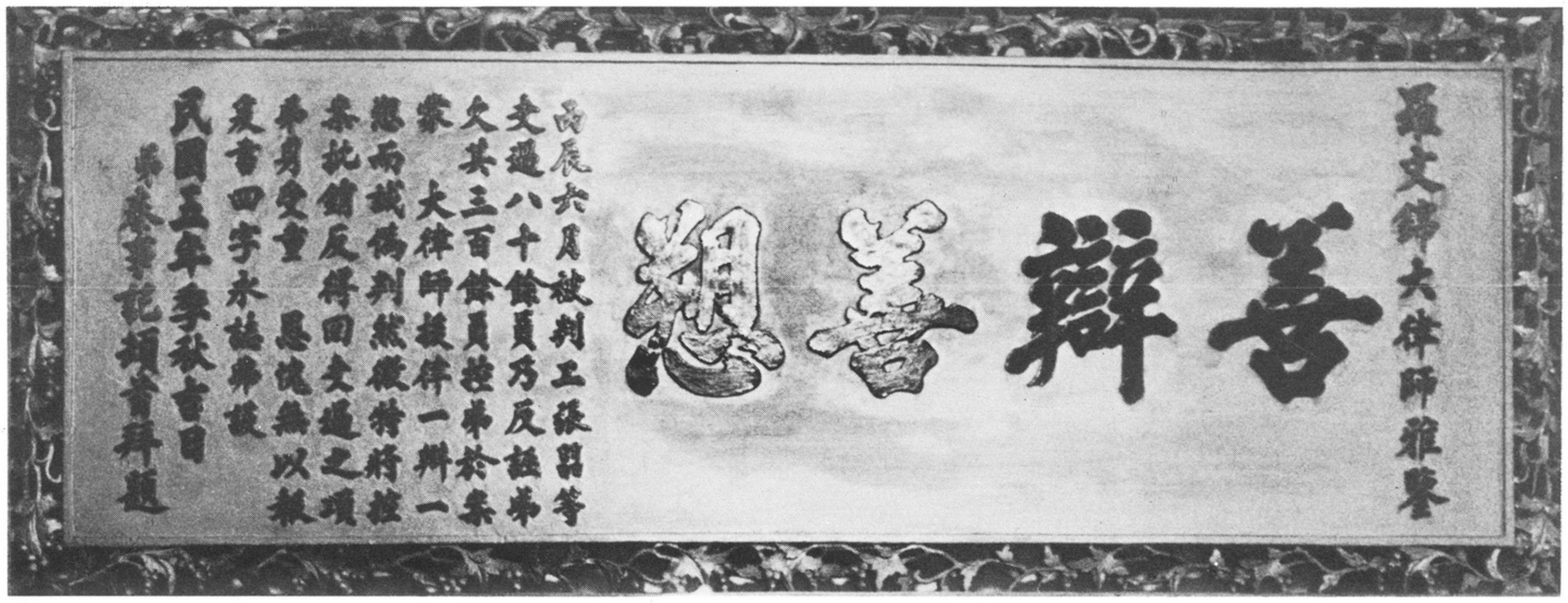


One of many warm notes of congratulations that M.K. received after his knighthood in 1948.

An undated but breathtakingly beautiful "thank you" note in old style Chinese characters that Madam Au Lai-yung sent M.K. in gratitude for his legal services.

A "thank you note" in beautiful Chinese caligraphy to M.K. for chairing the South China Athletic Association in July 1931.

Mr. Tsun used this gorgeous plaque of caligraphy to thank M.K. for legal help in the Autumn of 1916.



As one of the most respected representatives of the Hong Kong people, M.K. was often asked to host visiting dignitaries, like the Duchess of Kent who came to Hong Kong in 1952.

Vic assured us that she and the Duchess exchanged pleasantries and not gossip during this tete-a-tete.

All members of ExCo — from the four senior Government members who serve Ex-Officio to the nine Unofficials or members of the private sector — are bound by oath to keep the Council's discussions secret.

Through the Council, the administration is able to say that it governs with the advice and consent of the people. It has been government policy to rule Hong Kong by popular consent, if not by popular vote. This is done by inviting "responsible critics" to join in the formation of policy.

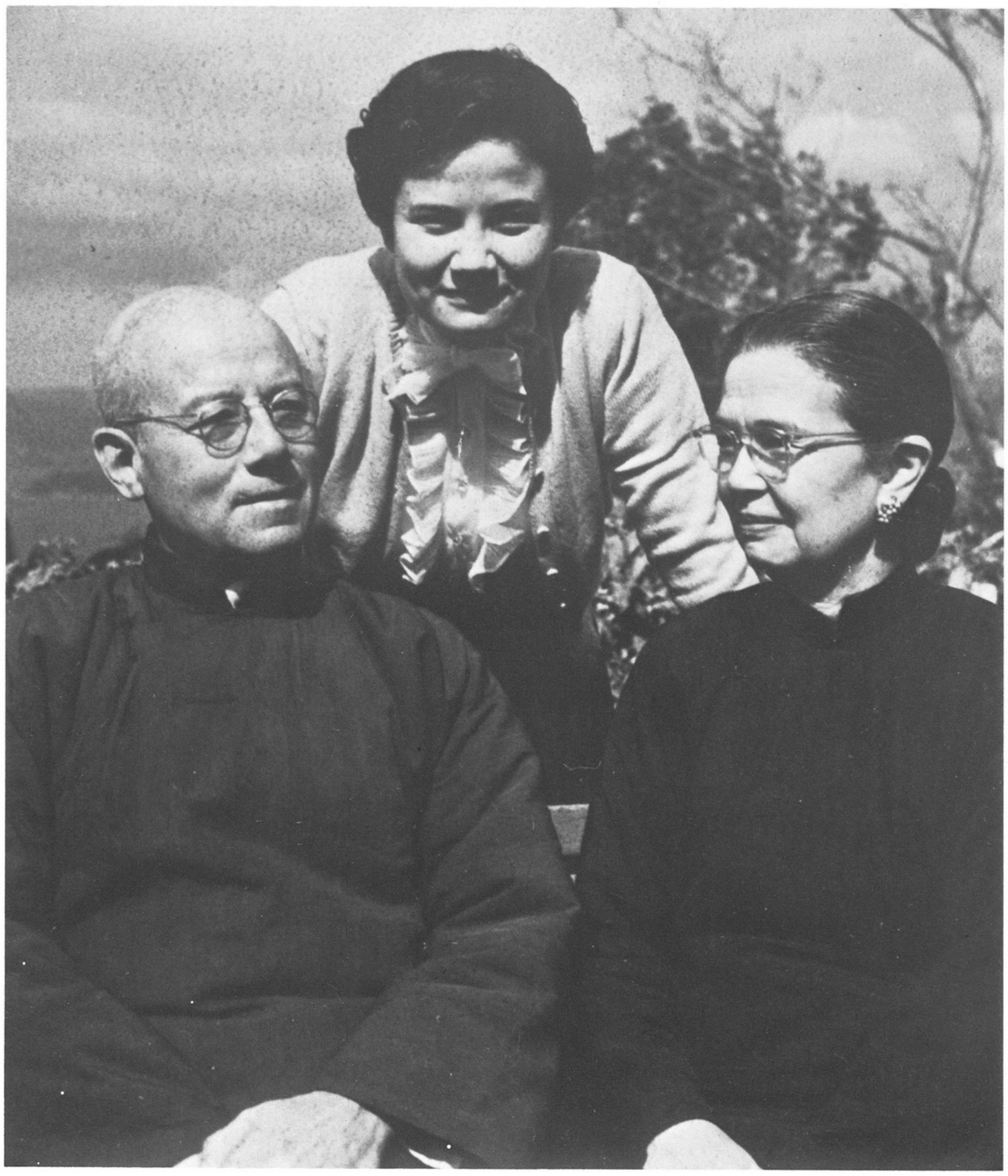
This has several advantages. Cynically, it neutralizes prospective enemies, or those considered "do-gooders cum potential trouble-makers" by bringing them onto policy and advisory boards. On the good side, it gives the government a system of changing itself through responsibile criticism.

But, as with everything he touched, M.K.'s participation as a "responsible critic" was special.

In his book "Via Ports," Sir Alexander Grantham, Governor of Hong Kong from 1947 until 1957, wrote of M.K. with respect and admiration:

"People and press (of Hong Kong) were vigilant as to their rights, but the best watch-dogs were the unofficial members of Executive Council.

"Outstanding amongst them was Sir Man-Kam Lo, whose death in 1959 was a great loss to the Colony. He had a first class brain, great moral courage and a capacity for digging down into details without getting lost in them. I can picture him at a meeting of the Council when some difficult or controversial



M.K., Rita and Vic December 27th 1954

The legal advice M.K. gave Mr. Chan in August 1923 inspired this stunning note.

The members of the Hong Kong Gold and Silver Exchange were so pleased by M.K.'s appointment to the Legislative Council that they commissioned this congratulatory note in the Winter of 1935.

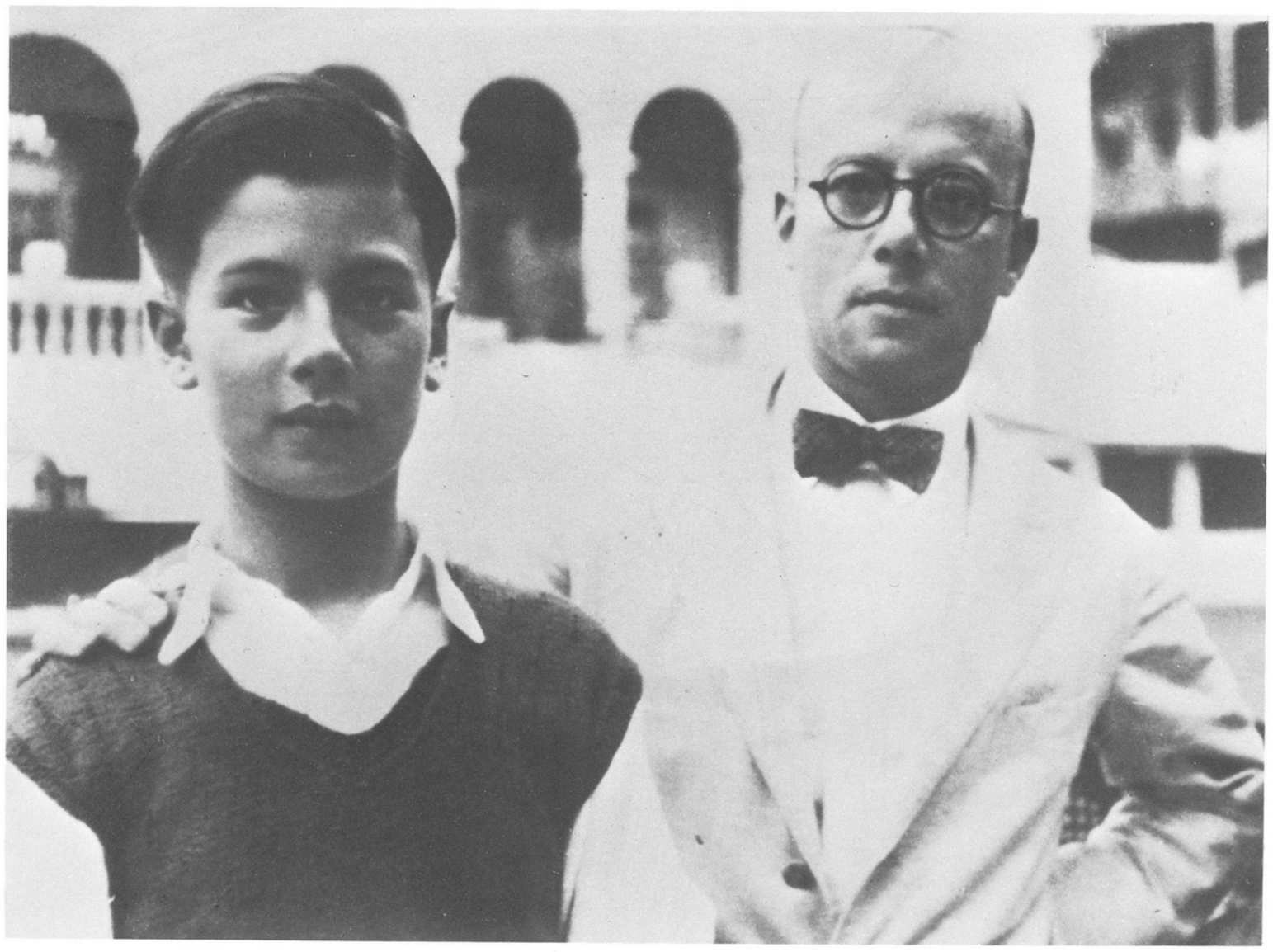
subject was under discussion. Another member would be expanding his views. From the glint in M.K.'s eyes and the way his lips were moving, I knew he had something forceful to say. I could hardly wait for the previous speaker to finish and to hear M.K.. Then again, when a complex but dull matter was being dealt with by the circulation of papers, on which members would write their opinions, I would look to see what M.K. had written and, as often as not, save myself the tedium of reading all the other minutes. He was invariably right to the point.''

It is a little strange that there are many things in Hong Kong that commemorate Sir Robert, who beause of his flare and his fabulous wealth was always better known.

But it was M.K. who gave his generation its most important asset — ideals. He was one of the few men in Hong Kong who was both powerful and respected.

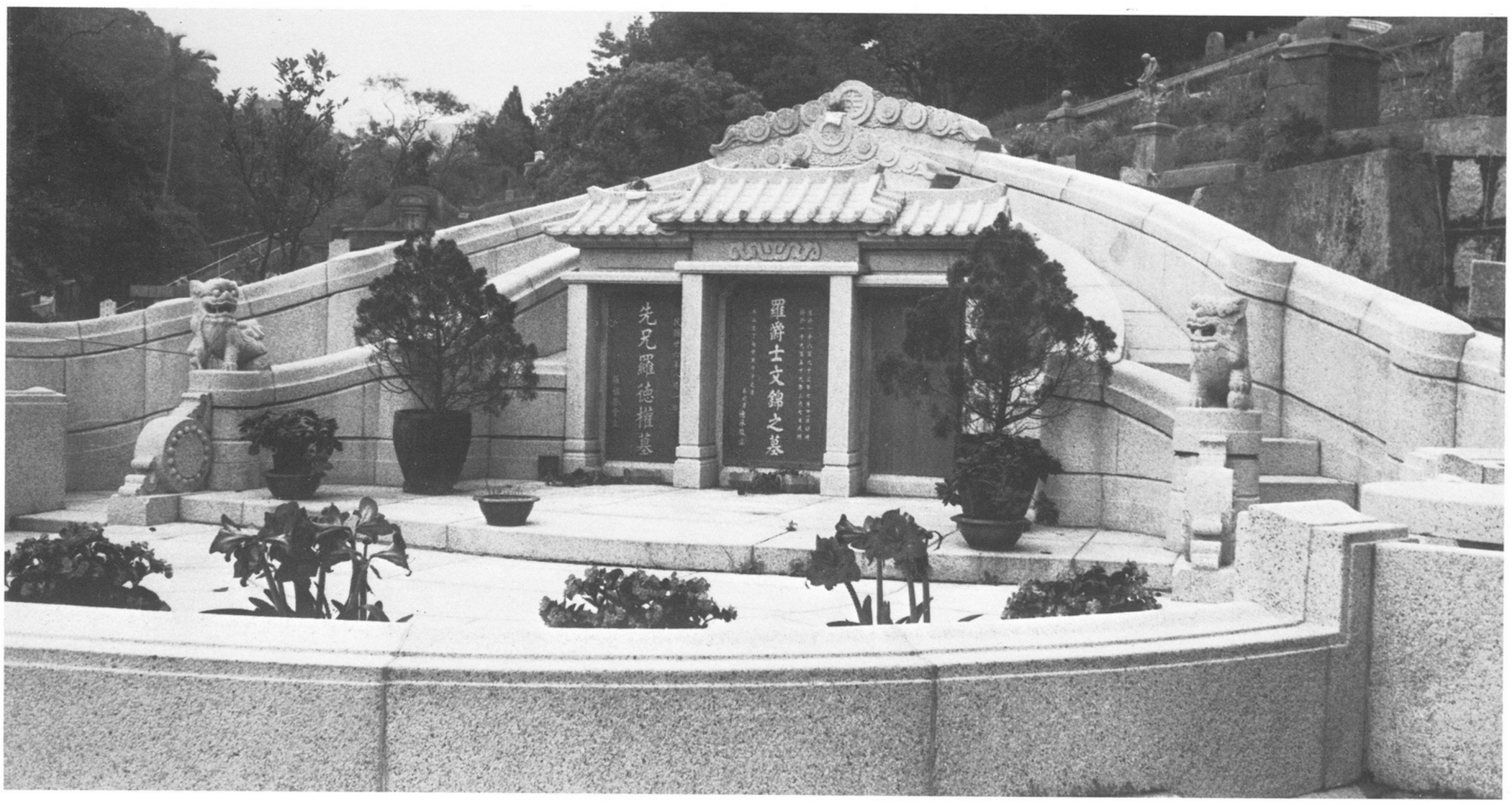
Today, I carry a reminder of M.K. with me — his briefcase. His faded name is on it; I have added mine.

The stone walls of Tytam's terraces and the tennis courts were built by M.K. and to this day I can see him working on them.



Wilbur and M.K. on Wilbur's 11th birthday: November 1, 1933.

The graves of M.K. and Wilbur. The blank space is reserved for Victoria.



The tennis match between the Chinese Recreation Club and Tytam was an annual event. In 194 it was held at Tytam. Seated from left: Lee Wai Tong, Colonial Secretary MacDougall, Governor Sir Alexander Grantham. Tsui Wai Pui, Secretary of Chinese Affairs Todd and Tsui Yan Pui. Standing from left: Paul Kong, T.S. Lo, M.W. Lo, Kenneth Lo, M.K. Lo, Norman Lo. Dr. Ride, Tommy Lo, Donald Lo and Ho Ka Lau.

Vic, T.S. and Wendy make a toast at a family dinner in 1982.

Home To Hong Kong

I returned to Hong Kong as a solicitor in 1961 and joined Lo & Lo. Shortly after I had settled into the job, a young relative — dressed in a Saville Row suit and wearing a gold watch — came to the office to ask for a handout. He was broke, he said, and having trouble with his girlfriend, etc.

"In Hong Kong, you won't starve and if I give you a handout you won't struggle," I said. "You need to struggle to succeed and I will not be party to your degeneration.

"Starve a little," I suggested kindly. "You'll think of something."

There was a lovely spark of total anger in his eyes — I enjoyed it thoroughly. Today, he is a wealthy and successful man — a man to be respected.

At about the same time, I met Leslie Sung who remains the best friend, the best colleague and the best bridge partner a man could have.

A brilliant man, Leslie left his job as editor of the Hongkong Standard at the age of 48 and became my articled clerk! Shortly thereafter he became a partner in Lo & Lo.

We invented a bridge system together. For years we played for Hong Kong in Far East championships (including Australia and New Zealand). So far as I can remember, Hong Kong never did worse than 3rd place.

Later we played for the Hong Kong Team representing the Far East region in the finals of the World Bridge Championships in Monte Carlo and were outclassed — but we were there and played against the famous Italian Blue Team and the Texas Aces.

Leslie often said that the greater the challenge, the better my performance. What he really was complaining about was that when we played against weaker players, my concentration faltered more.

Leslie also frequently chides me for my refusal to "tolerate fools, pretense or sham."

How I miss those days and nights of competitive bridge and long evenings of talk over a bottle of Scotch. Like fast cars and cigarettes, they belonged to a different era.

Holding my breath, literally, as we awaited another of Leslie Sung's brilliant bids at the Far East Pairs Championship in Taipei in 1969. That's Kovit Sucharitakul of Thailand seated in the centre.

Keeping a poker face during a bridge game can be difficult — especially when half the audience is peering over your shoulder! That's Patrick K.H. Huang of Taiwan seated on the left during the Far East Pairs Championship in Taipei in 1969.

Lui Chun-wah, Chairman of the Chinese Club, hands over the Chinese Club Cup for the Open Pairs Championship. From the expression on his face — it is clear no one was happier about the win than Leslie Sung.

The World of Politics

I followed M.K.'s footsteps through the doors of Lo & Lo and into the world of politics. It all started in the mid-60's when at the age of 30, I was elected President of the Law Society of Hong Kong. Then, after the usual apprenticeships in a number of advisory boards and the Urban Council, I was appointed in November 1974 to the Legislative Council.

At the time, quite a fuss was made of Government's commitment to get younger men involved.

This was followed in 1980 by my appointment to the Executive Council. The South China Morning Post of March 15 had this to say:

"The Lo Road Into Exco"

"Following in the footsteps of his distinguished father and uncle, Mr. Lo Tak-shing moves into what might almost be called his 'family seat' in Executive Council.

"His father, the late Sir Man-kam Lo, was both a Legislative Councillor (having been appointed in 1935) and an Executive Councillor.

"Mr. Lo's uncle, Mr. Lo Man-wai, ... was an Urban, Legislative and Executive Councillor, taking over the latter seat after his brother's death in 1959.

"Like father and uncle, Mr. T.S. Lo is a partner of the old-established law firm of Lo and Lo, which Sir Man-kam headed for many years.

"The Lo family is one of the oldest in the Colony with its roots deep in the history of Hong Kong.

"Like his son, Sir Man-kam was a frequent and strident critic of Government policy ...

"Mr. T.S. Lo, at 44, has had a distinguished career in law following his education in Hongkong and England where he graduated from Wadham College, Oxford.

"He was admitted to the Supreme Court of Hongkong to practise as a lawyer at the age of 25..."

Sir Philip Haddon-Cave presides at the investiture ceremony for a new Commander of the Order of the British Empire. 1982.

Wendy and T.S. stand aside as China Light directors Sydney Gordon and Lawrence Kadoorie hear Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's views on the opening of the new Castle Peak power station in 1982.

Lo ladies: the eldest and the youngest in February 1982.

GROWING CLOSER...

Today, my immediate family is spread around the world but we grow closer each year. My wife — beautiful, wonderful Wendy Cheung Lo — came into my hectic life at the perfect moment, bringing with her unending joy and unwavering stability.

There is around Wendy an almost magic aura of peace and strength. I do not know about other men, but I need both from time to time.

Strong-minded but gentle, Wendy makes me feel as if her sole job in life is her husband. And she tackles that job with a concentration that is never overwhelming and an affection that is never cloying.

She has the unusual knack of always being there when I need her. And yet she manages to run a busy independent life that frees me from pangs of guilt when, as happens all too often, the demands of the world of politics and law or bridge keep me away from home.

She is undemanding and yet never compliant. It was Wendy who made me aware of my own health and gently persuaded me to stop smoking and moderate my social drinking.

Frugal with herself, she is generous with others and is patient and kind with older people. The love she carries into Vic's world is quite obviously reciprocated.

An artistic soul, Wendy graduated with honours in fine arts from the College of the Holy Names in Oakland, California. One result of her artistic temperament is an absolute abhorrence of banks, which she likens to mausoleums!

My memories of our wedding in London remind me of how refreshingly unpretentious my Wendy has always been.

We were married at the Central London Registry in a simple ceremony witnessed only by my bridge partner and the driver of our car and we celebrated afterwards at a wedding dinner hosted by my tutor at Wadham College, Oxford.

Our wedding photograph shows Wendy wearing a broad brimmed white hat. It never fails to remind me how cherishable she is — for it was her only extravagance on a day for which most brides spend months purchasing and planning. And the acquisition of that hat was a very last minute decision as the sentimentality of the occasion overcame Wendy's inherent practicality — a practicality rarely conquered. It wasn't until we were actually on our way from Claridges to the marriage registry that Wendy suddenly bounced out of the car, dashed into a shop and bought the hat for her wedding costume.

What's so funny, Wendy?

Taking a commercial break with Dad on the 18th floor in September 1983.

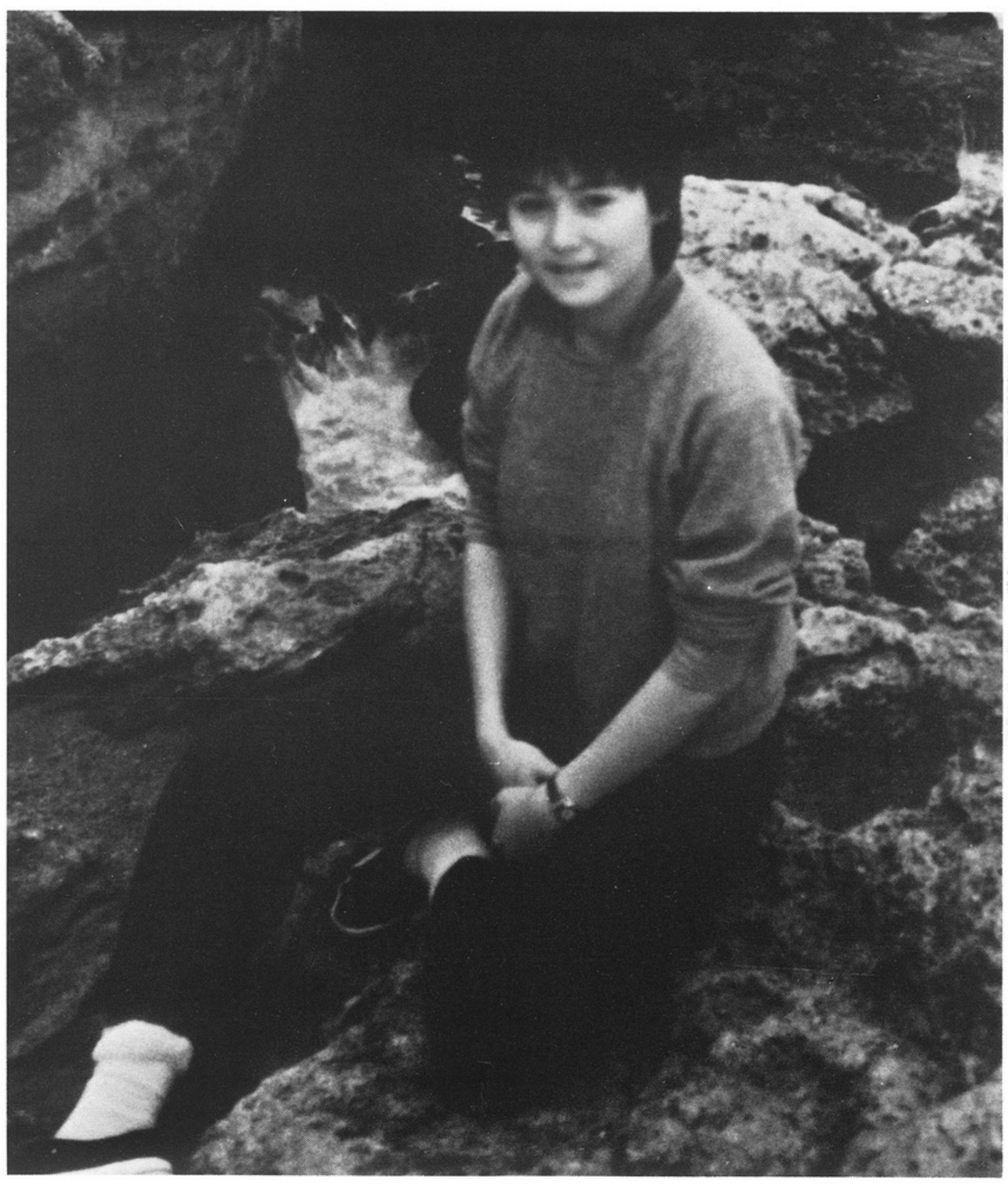
And then there are my children. I would like them to be free of the idea that I live for them but my life does revolve around worry over their futures. It is partly for them that I fight the battles of this uncertain world.

There is Deidre, the eldest and most independent, whose Irish name is usually spelled Deirdre. I didn't like the "r" in the middle — it made it too fussy. Sir Michael Hogan, one-time Irish Chief Justice of Hong Kong, said I had taken the sorrow out of the name.

Deidre, born 6th November 1965, is now a student of history at the University of London's School of Slavonic and East European Studies.

An enthusiastic sportswoman, she is quite keen on skiing and tennis and is a top class fencer who made it to the finals in foils in England. She applies herself to her sports with vigour — one only has to witness the press ups she completes every morning to know that. And there is a streak of the tomboy in

Taking the plunge at the Hong Kong penthouse in August 1982



On the rocks in North Africa in April 1982

"My own car!" London, April 1983.

her that helps blue jeans win the battle over skirts nearly every time.

Her independence has often frightened me out of my wits. Like the time, when she was only about seven years old, that she loaded tiny Bevin into a boat and went rowing off Tytam! Bevin fell into the water and somehow Deidre rescued him. When she finally got back to shore, I scolded her for doing such a dangerous thing.

Calm and cool as always, she primly told me: "It was really quite safe, Daddy, the gardener was watching us."

The gardener was on a faraway hillside!

Already a woman, Deidre is determined and concentrated on success. She rarely enters into any project without doing extensive homework. Her arguments on the necessity of having her own flat in London were as finely honed as an expert legal brief — and I was certainly no match for them.

When Deidre set her heart on a car of her own, she did careful research on the pros and cons of each make and model. There are no flies on that girl — she knows all the peripheries! She informed me that the most efficient car for her was a sleek, continental model. But this time, the father in me conquered her smooth arguments. She is a good careful driver though a little too fast for me sometimes and I decided that something a bit "sturdier", not to mention slower, was better suited. So I bought her a jeep.

"Don't even think about Ferraris," I told her. "For the rest of your life, I'll keep buying you jeeps and Land Rovers."

Watching her climb behind the wheel for the first time brought back memories of the first car M.K. bought me — just after I entered university. But that was a bit different. I got what I wanted — a Hillman Minx convertible.

Bevin and his pal Jane Curzon clown it up in January 1982.

In April 1982, both Bevin and James considered being photographed an excruciating ordeal!

My sons are Bevin, born 30th August 1967 and the gentlest, and James, born 6th April 1974 and the most mischievous.

And the baby, born 31st August 1977, is Jane Curzon, who loves to draw and sing and dance.

All the little ones have different personalities and lifestyles.

Bevin works hard at his school in California and his warm letters home brighten our lives. A kind, sensitive child, he is ever ready to champion those smaller or weaker.

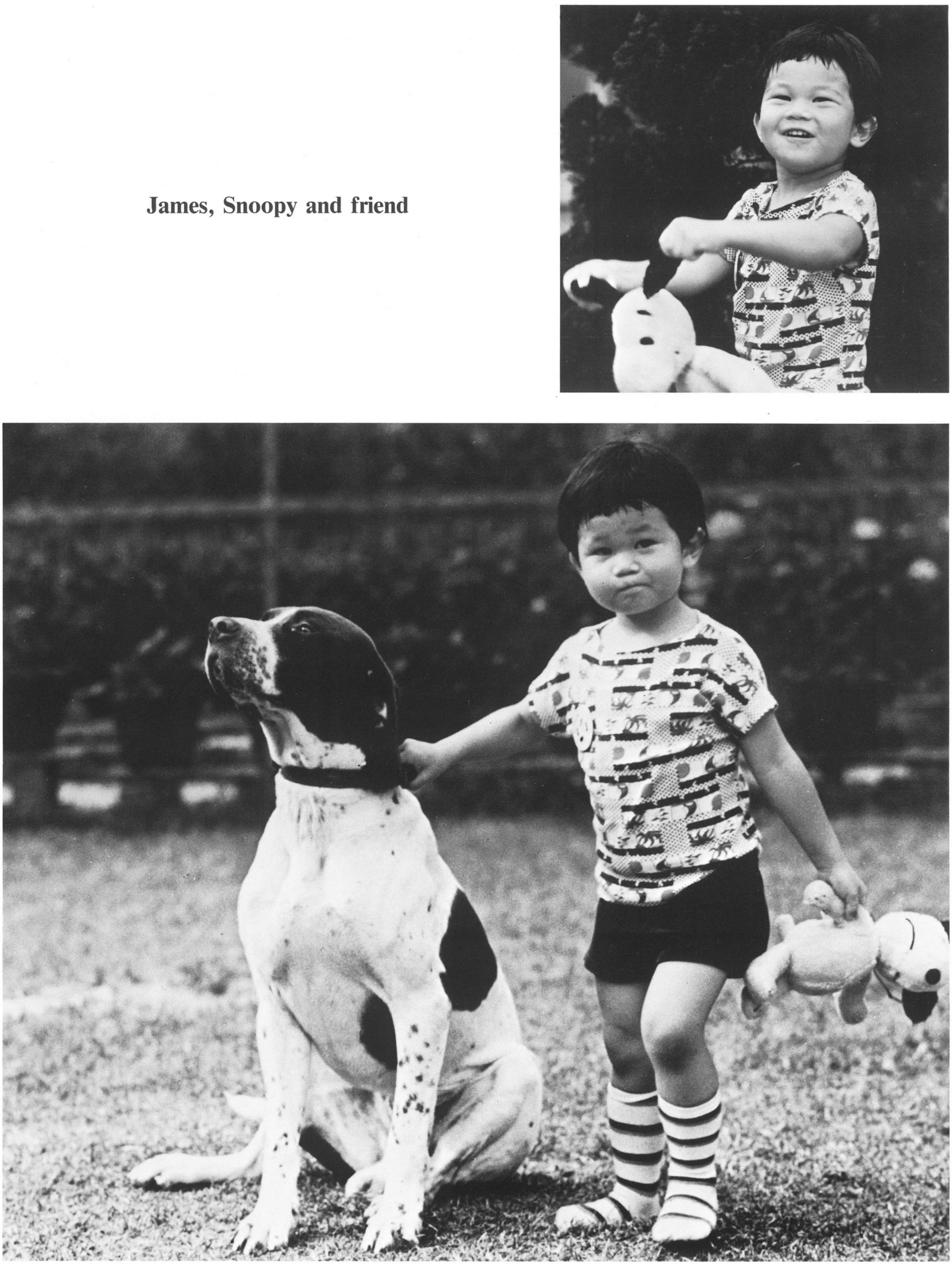
As he gets older, James already shows signs of the thoughtful and unselfish man he will become. Today he is a bubbly child with a capacity for exploding with sheer joy.

Like Deidre, James has become interested in sports and with her encouragement has started to fence, ski and swim. Ever curious, he seems to be interested in everything from music to word games. His sense of humor is already delightful and he tells wonderfully funny tales.

Little Jane is developing into a very proper, poised young lady whose precociousness often startles her father.

I dedicate this story of our family to them all and I hope that it will make up a little for what, because of the gulf of time and distance, they may have missed.

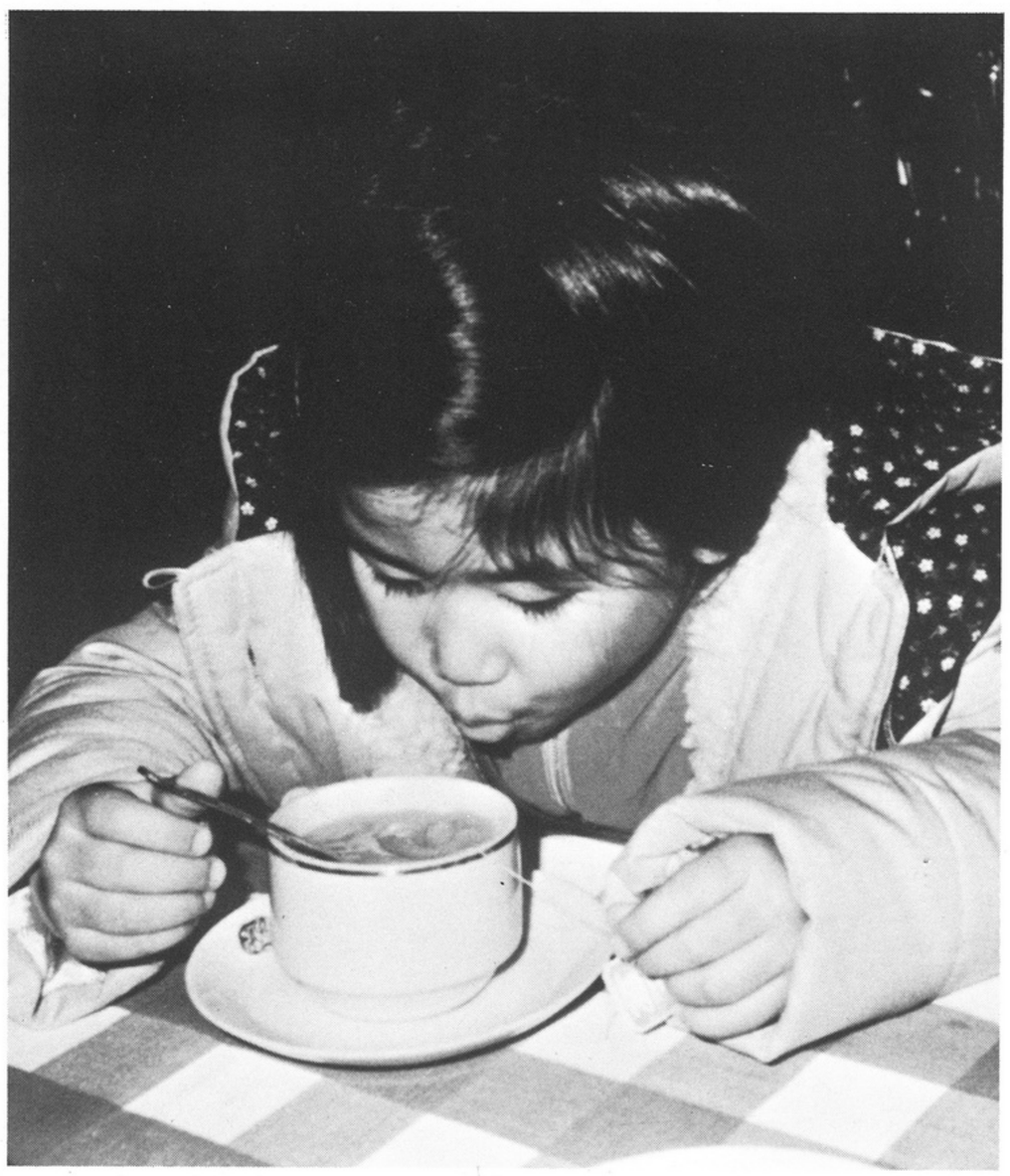
James, Snoopy and friend



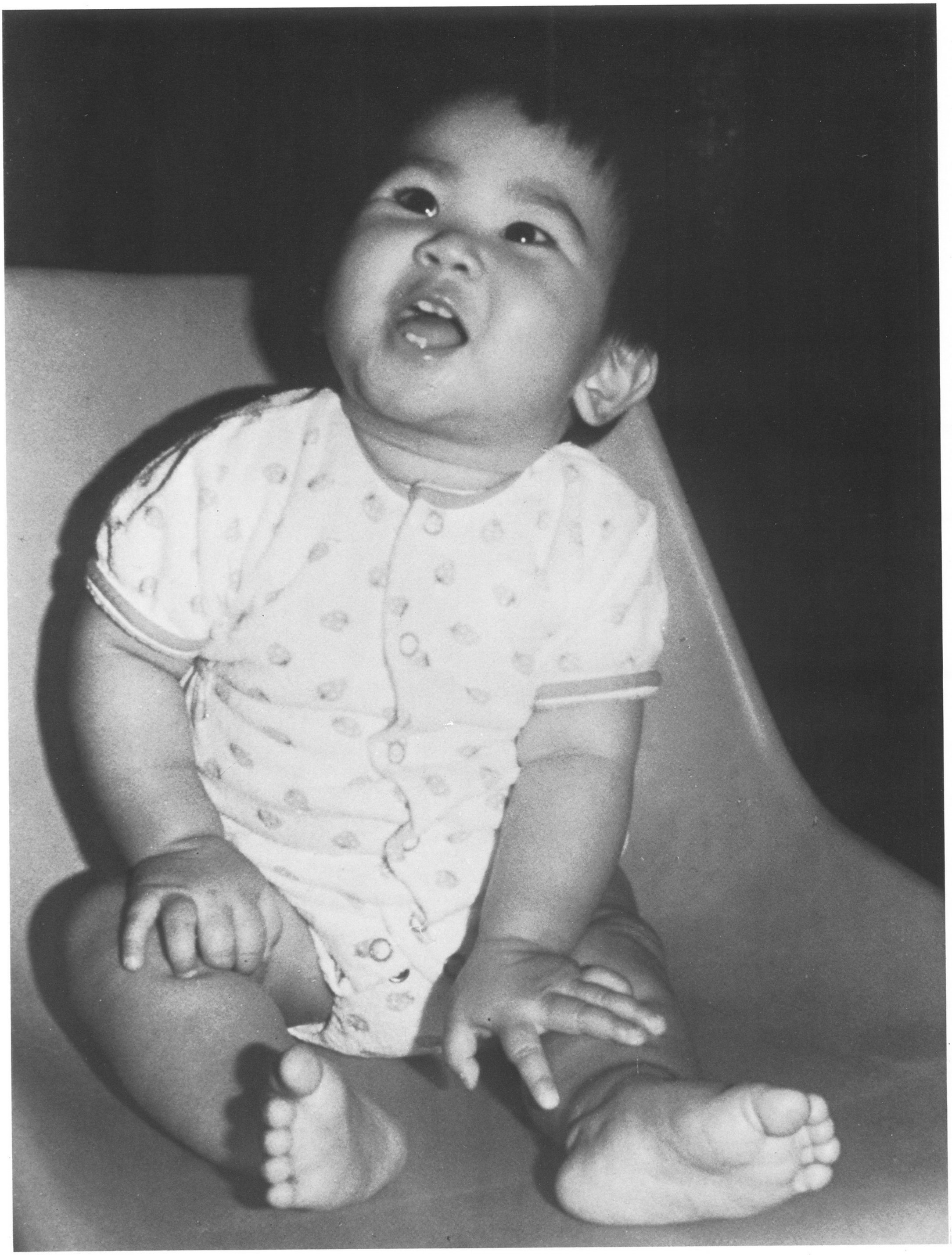
August 1979: Majong anyone?

BABY JANE CURZON

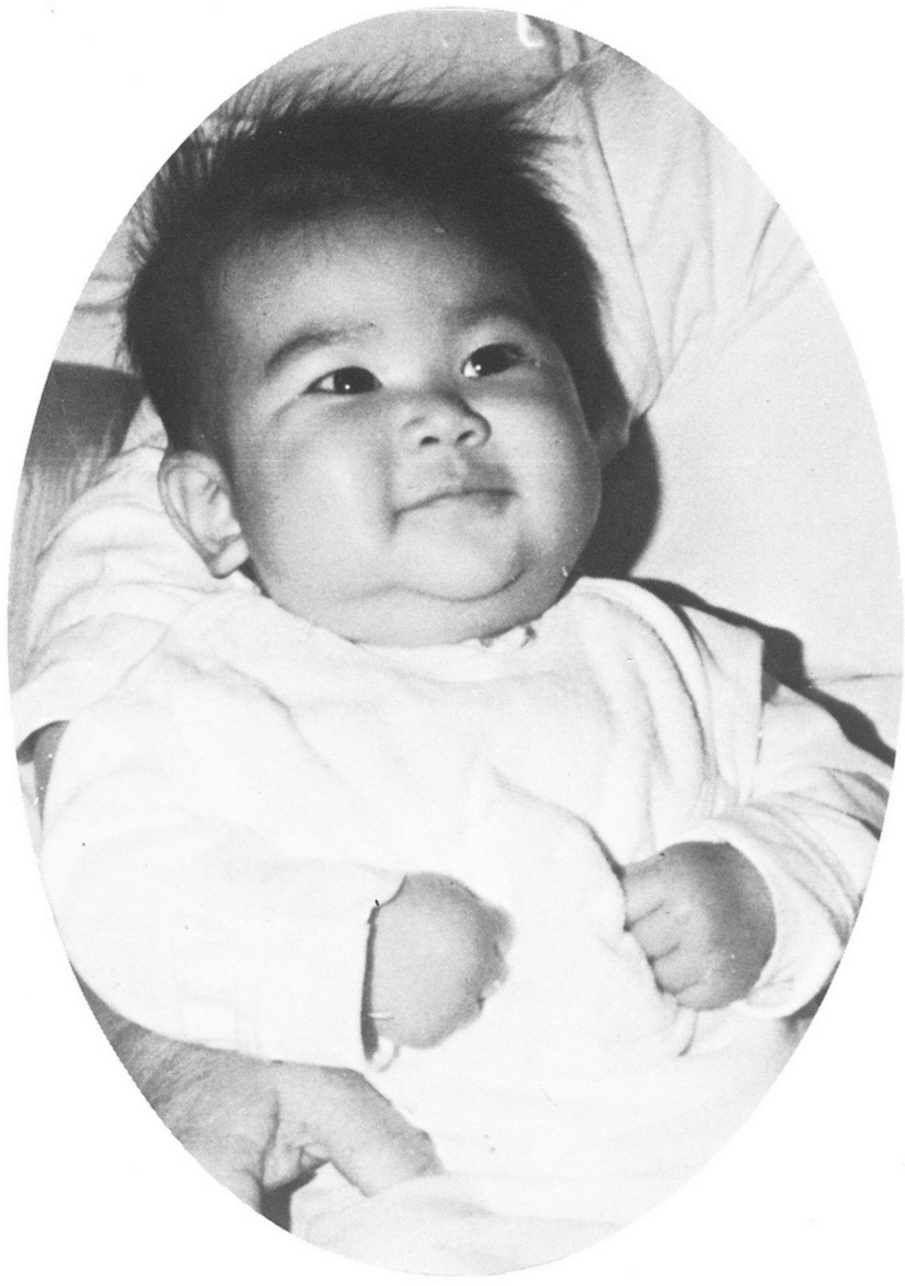
January 1982: She's quite a proper miss when it comes to pouring tea . . .



but drinking it is another story!

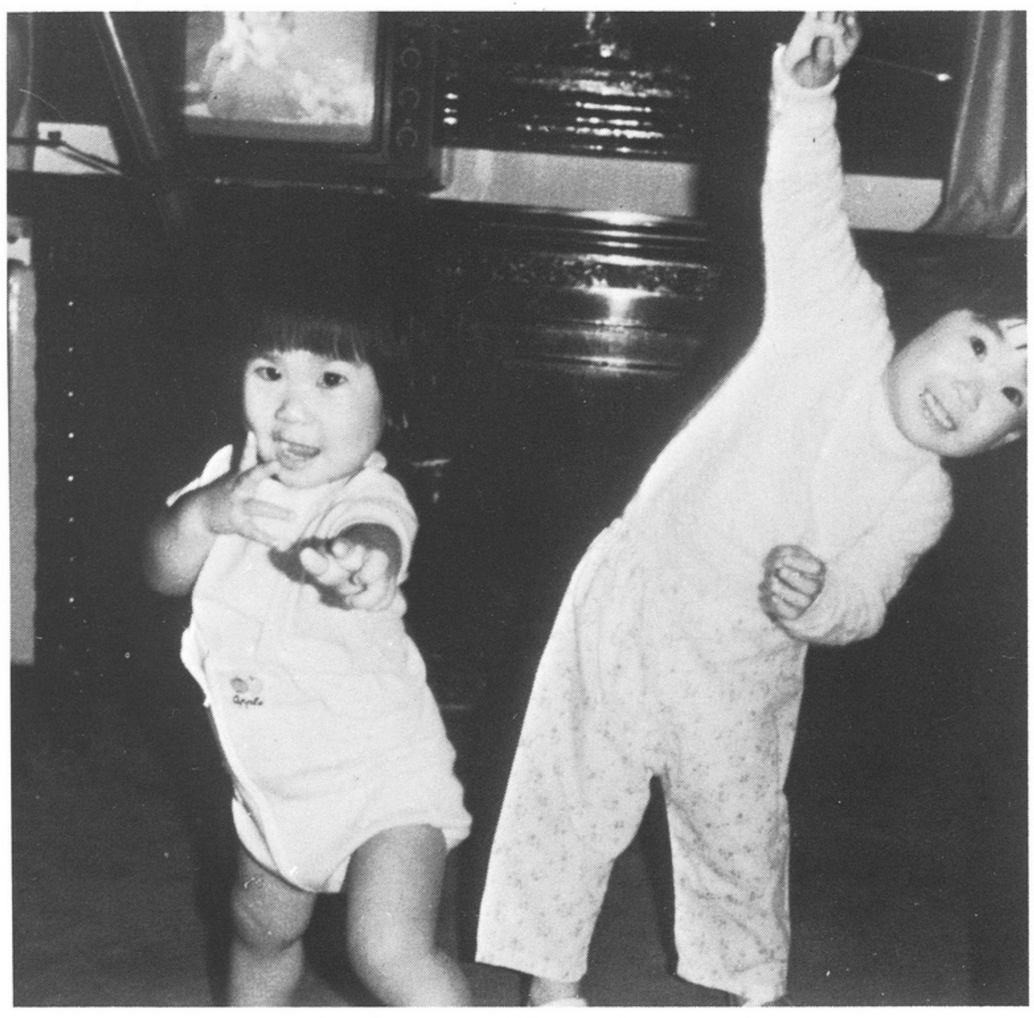


Vamping for the camera in January 1982.



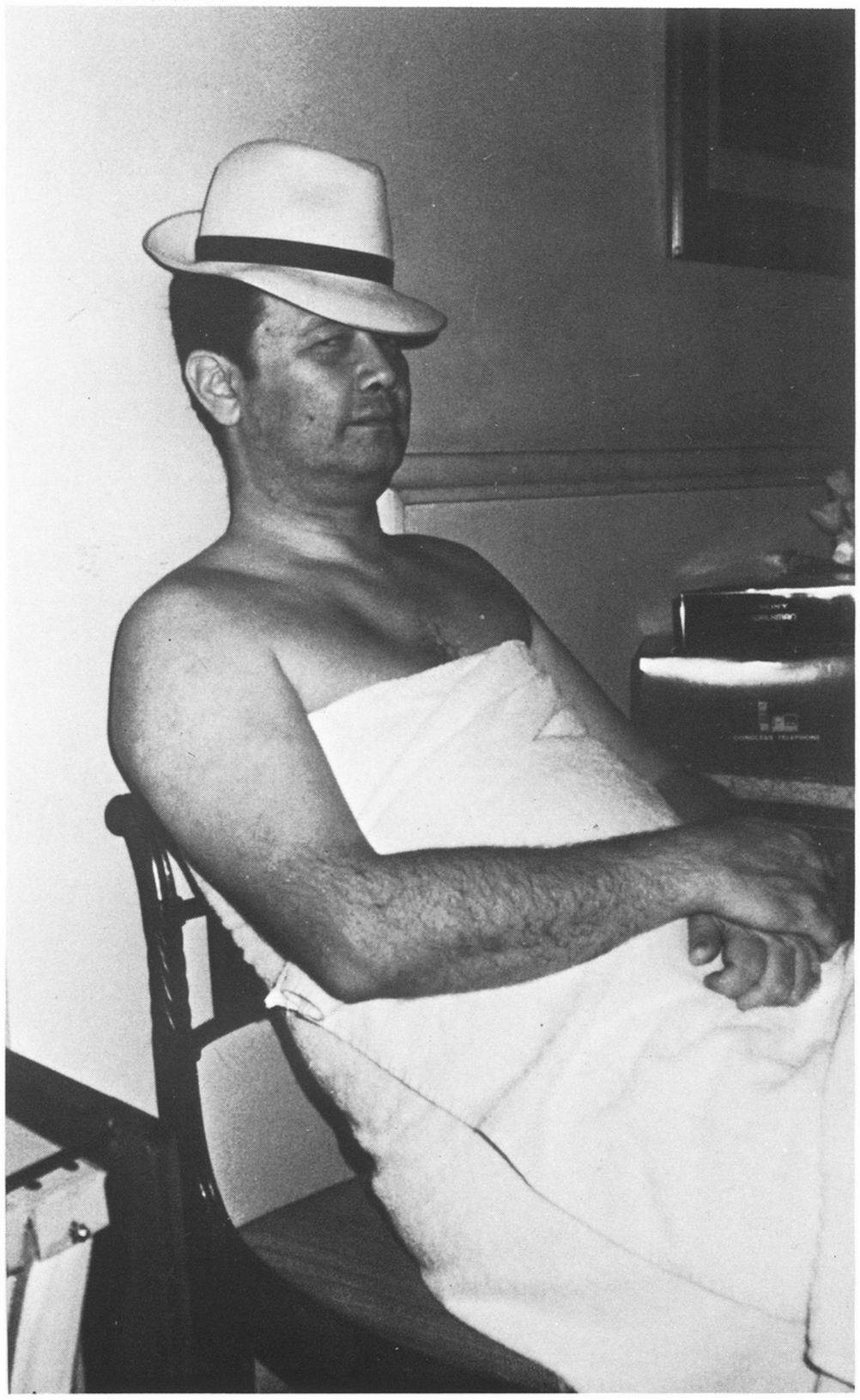
Jane Curzon was born smiling

She's always trying to keep up with her older cousins.



Learning to pick up her room in March 1979.

LO FAMILY ALBUM



Okay . . . who hid my clothes?

June 1983: Exactly who is saving whom?

THE CAR WASH!!

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Credit as well as love to my mother, Victoria, my sister, Vera, and my aunts Irene and Jean, whose memories I have tapped and used to correct and expand my own.